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**STORM OVER
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ISSUE 9



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Senior Manager of D&D Mike Mearls discovers a new truth about giants

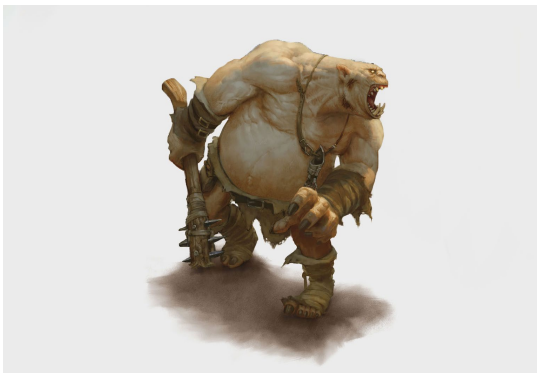


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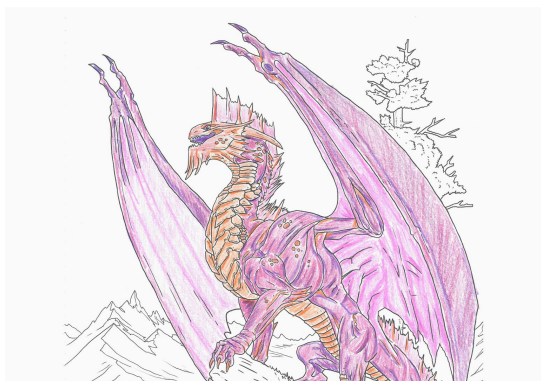
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Enter The Hall of the Fire Giant King

Sage Advice

Jeremy Crawford hosts the monthly column that gives official clarifications of D&D rules and provides reference documents to help your D&D game run more smoothly.

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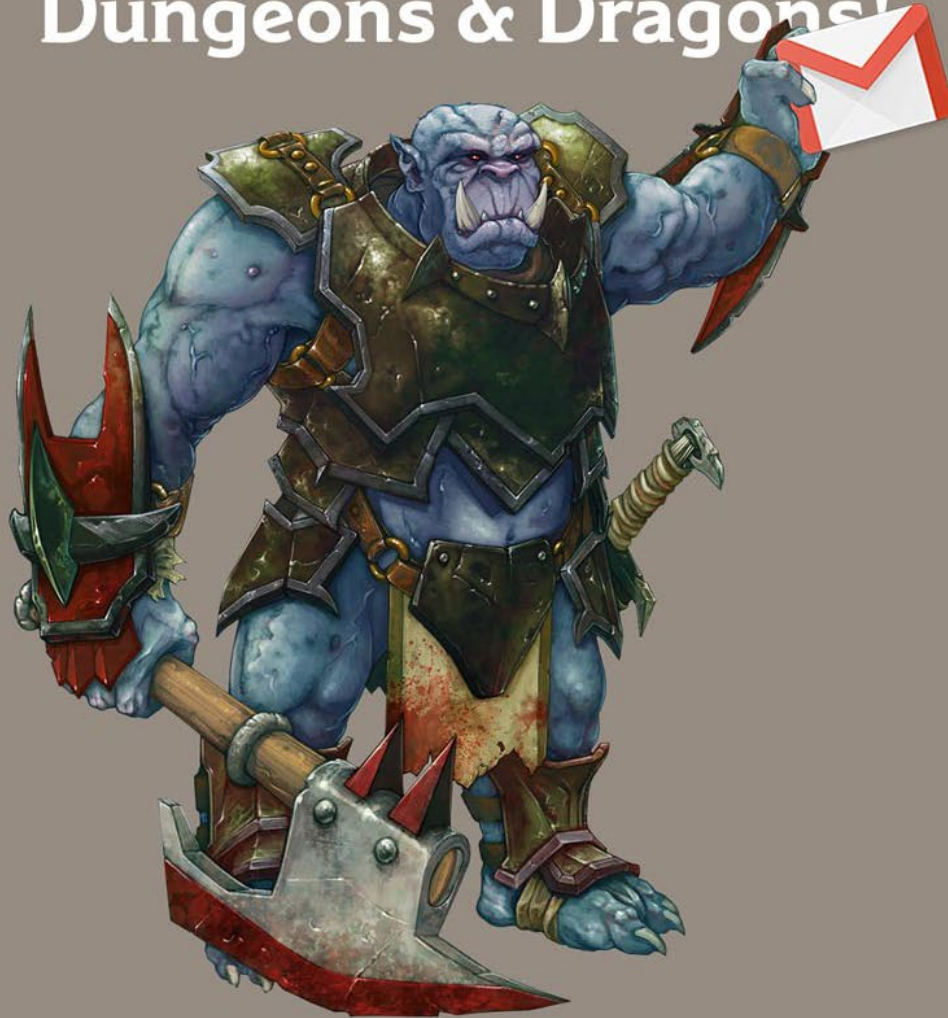
There's no need to cast Divination to discover next issue's goodies: we speak to Forgotten Realms creator Ed Greenwood about his latest novel, remember Dungeons & Dragons videogames gone by and dig deep into the latest action RPG Sword Coast Legends.



A big thank you to the extended D&D family for their help with the creation of this issue.

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DRAGON+ 9

Welcome to Dragon+ Issue 9

Senior Manager of D&D Mike Mearls discovers
a new truth about giants

Mike Mearls

Did you know that, despite being a D&D fan since 1981, I've only rarely used giants in my campaigns? I used them once in an Eberron campaign, but would've swapped them out for whatever humanoid-type, intelligent creature I could've found to challenge the party given their level.



I battled plenty of giants in the *Eye of the Beholder* PC games. The poor brutes were forced to crawl around on their knees to fit into that series' dungeons. Giants probably showed up in the Gold Box series games, like *Pool of Radiance* and *Curse of the Azure Bonds*, but I can't remember them.

Weren't there hill giants guarding the Stojanow Gate? (As an aside, I'm running a campaign right now inspired by those two classic games.) They most definitely make an appearance in the *Temple of Elemental Evil* PC game, where critical hits from lucky hill giants threw monkey wrench after monkey wrench into my finely honed, tactical plans.

In thinking about it, I've never been a real fan of giants because I simply saw them a bigger, tougher take on the typical orc or hobgoblin. Don't get me wrong, I love the original *Against the Giants*

adventures. *Steading of the Hill Giant Chieftain* is one of my favorite D&D adventures of all time. The rules for handling large numbers of creatures in a battle, on page 250 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, come directly from running that adventure in our playtests while developing the game. The final session saw the characters, allied with about a hundred liberated orc slaves, take on several dozen giants, ogres, and other nasties in a titanic battle. In prepping my session, the rules for handling mobs were born.

With all that in mind, I have to admit a certain amount of trepidation when Chris Perkins told me he wanted to feature giants as our antagonist for the 2016 storyline. On the face of it, I didn't see much to make me excited.

I realized then that tackling the story meant making giants interesting in a uniquely D&D way. After all, I couldn't be the only person who felt the way I did. Luckily, when you work with such a talented group of storytellers and game designers, the answer seems to always be right around the next corner.

Watching Chris, Adam Lee, Matt Sernett, and Richard Whitters bring D&D giants to life was a wild ride. It started with an archaeological dig into D&D's past to uncover the history of giants in the Forgotten Realms and delve into their society and beliefs. That process yielded the ordning and the caste system it represented.

From there, the team had the stroke of genius to take the central element of giant culture and smash it, leaving the characters to pick up the pieces. I never would've guessed that the primary element we had to make giants different would end up being precisely the thing the characters in our story decided to overturn. At first blush that might seem illogical, but what better way to make something the core of the story than by putting it – or in this case, its absence – dead center in the action?

At the start, I was a DM who rarely used giants and thought of them as just a higher level version of the standard brute with a weapon I could use in my campaigns. Now, after watching *Storm King's Thunder* come together, I see them in a much different light. A giant is no longer a big bruiser in my eyes, but a member of a complex, troubled society that once ruled the world and now struggles in the

shadow of an ancient, lost realm.

My hope is that through reading and playing through the various products we've released for this, dare I say it, gigantic storyline, you, too can come to look at giants a bit differently and appreciate what makes them unique in the Realms of D&D. If we've done our job, you will not only see them in a different light but are now ready to tell your own stories about them.

Mike Mearls, Senior Manager for D&D

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Storm Over Neverwinter

Thomas Foss

It's our most challenging piece of content ever created," says Thomas Foss, lead designer of *Neverwinter* at Cryptic Studios. "Brand new mechanics will challenge players' skill and teamwork. Work together and you just might survive." Giants are currently dominating life in the D&D universe, but *Neverwinter* is promising a rather different approach to gigantic foes. *Dragon+* spoke to Cryptic's lead designer to learn more about *Neverwinter*'s unique take on giantkind, as well as the MMO's debut on a brand new platform, the PlayStation 4.

Can you tell us more about
Neverwinter's Storm King's
Thunder storyline?

Our heroes have just finished
defending the Underdark against

demons from our previous update, The Maze Engine. The ordning, the system of order within giant society, has been shattered, causing all giants to pursue their own plots to reach the top of the pecking order. Jarl Storvald of the frost giants hatches a plan to steal the Ring of Winter from Artus Cimber (who you might remember from the novel, *The Ring of Winter*). Storvald wants to use the ring to freeze over the world, ascending frost giants to the top of giant society.



Svardborg Exterior

How does Neverwinter Storm King's Thunder differ from the tabletop experience?

The *Storm King's Thunder* campaign covers players encountering all

of the different kinds of giants. We decided to focus on the frost giants in particular. We changed the story somewhat, as the campaign goes over Jarl Storvald *trying* to get the ring. We suggested a scenario where he already *has* the ring in our game, and our heroes are playing catch up. We worked to develop a story that would remain true to the module being developed while allowing our game to elevate Jarl Storvald to be a main antagonist.

What new features, characters and locations will players get to explore in *Neverwinter Storm King's Thunder*?

Players will go through the destroyed streets of Bryn Shander, the eerie forests of Lonelywood, and the harsh coasts of Cold Run to stop Jarl Storvald's plot. Along the way, they'll come across familiar faces like Wulfgar and Catti-Brie, who will help in the fight against Jarl Storvald. [You can read about Wulfgar and Catti-Brie in the *Legend of Drizzt* novels by R.A. Salvatore.] Players will also receive aid from characters featured in the *Storm King's Thunder* tabletop game, such as Harshnag the Grim, the legendary frost giant adventurer, Duessa Shane, speaker of Bryn Shander, and Artus Cimber, bearer of the Ring of Winter.

Iconic locations like Icewind Dale and Lonelywood also make an appearance, how did you bring those to life?

We start by diving deep into our D&D books and reference to fully understand the history, people and environments of Icewind Dale. Once we have a firm understanding of the lore, our artists and designers come together to build a pitch for the backstory, quests, environments, monsters, and characters for each part of Icewind Dale players will visit. Once past the planning stages, we build these locations with a focus on the mood and emotions we want the player to feel.

Lonelywood, for example, has a thick and ancient forest teeming with unknown evils surrounding the relative safety of the town. While players are in the town, we convey a sense of liveliness, warmth, and ease. As players venture deeper into the forest, the pathways fade away, signs of civilization are nowhere to be found, the brush gets thicker, and players soon realize they're in the deep wilderness, and also in deep danger. We built these places to give players an open wilderness to explore and find hidden quests, treasures and monsters.



Svardborg Interior

What new monsters, dungeons and challenges will players get to experience?

We'll be releasing the dungeon, Fangbreaker Island, our most challenging piece of content ever created. Players will fight against a deadly manticore at the top of a mountain peak, where they'll have to be aware of constant avalanches that risk killing the entire party in one fell swoop! They will travel from there to the shores of Fangbreaker, where a *dragon turtle* (that's right!) awaits to make lunch out of them. They'll have to avoid being flattened by his titanic body or being melted by his steam breath. Players who survive both challenges will encounter Drufi, the frost giant Herald of Winter, who will use the immense power of giant runes to destroy our heroes. Drufi will introduce brand new mechanics that will challenge players' skill and teamwork. Work together and you just might survive Drufi's onslaught!

How did you approach bringing gigantic foes into Neverwinter?

Big monsters are always cool, but also create lots of challenges for *Neverwinter*. The first and most obvious is size. Giants need a lot of room to swing their weapons and move, and players need enough room to be able to engage the giants and – and this is important – get away from those huge axes, maces and clubs! Since we have created many dungeons with large critters and giants (Malabog's castle, Mount Hotenow, Demons in Helms Hold) we have experience with

the practical challenges and knew what to do.

Renowned D&D characters are set to make guest appearances, can you tell us how they get involved?

Iconic D&D characters have been appearing with increasing frequency as players have become more and more prominent in helping the Sword Coast battle many enemies that look to seize power. Just recently players were able to fight alongside Bruenor Battlehammer, king of Gauntlgrym, and the infamous Drizzt. The *Storm King's Thunder* campaign sees some familiar faces from *Neverwinter's* first three years as the players follow Lord Neverember's request to escort Xuna, the rogue, to the festival of Bryn-Shander, far in the cold, cold north.

In addition to Xuna, recurring *Neverwinter* NPCs Makos and Celeste put in an appearance as the story unfolds. Over the course of the campaign they also meet Bruenor's adopted children, Catti-brie and Wulfgar, and the famed adventurer Artus Cimber, who, until recently, was the bearer of the powerful Ring of Winter. The whereabouts of that artifact item and the search to reclaim it unites these characters alongside players in an epic quest across Icewind Dale.



Frost Giant's Ship

What's been the most challenging part of bringing Neverwinter Storm King's Thunder to life?

It's without doubt the fight on Fangbreaker Island that caps off the story. This is the location of some of the coolest rewards and players will need to work toward being able to survive some of the terrible challenges and tough enemies the dungeon holds. In addition, Fangbreaker has a great plot point associated with it. We're currently keeping that under wraps, but players should find it a memorable and challenging moment. From a development point of view, every new module and campaign has a bunch of fun unique challenges.

The *Storm King's Thunder* campaign tells the story of the restoration of the settlements that make up Ten-Towns in the frozen north. One of the cool design hurdles to overcome here was how to make three icy frozen zones that all felt interesting and distinct in their own ways. The team knocked it out of the park with the blasted rubble-strewn opening zone set in the town of Bryn-Shander leading to the more rural forested area around Lonelywood, and finally the desolate bleak coastline of Cold Run. In each zone, as the campaign progresses, players need to restore the peace in the besieged towns and fight back against the frost giants, while figuring out what their king is planning and where he's holed up.

Bringing Neverwinter onto the PlayStation 4 is a major undertaking, how's that been going?

Yes, it's meant a lot of extra effort not only from the *Neverwinter* team but our core engineering group. The biggest technical design challenges are making sure everything hooks up and reads and plays correctly using a controller. We had to sweep all content and make sure that all the inputs not just worked, but worked well with a controller, adding in appropriate text that made sense with the platforms.

Alongside, art, programming and design working together to create the UI changes, making sure that all current in game needs are addressed, and in a way that is easy for players. I can't brag enough about our UI artists and engineers. They did such a fantastic job! UI is one of those things that if it is done right, you don't notice how cool it is; they are the unsung heroes of game design.

How would you pitch Neverwinter to potential new players,

especially ones on PS4, who might not have experienced it yet?

Neverwinter is a free-to-play action-oriented online adventure that takes players on a journey through iconic regions of Faerun such as the Sword Coast, Underdark and Icewind Dale. You will gain companions that grow with your character's experience. Players will also progress through *Neverwinter*'s many campaigns guiding them through epic storylines battling enemies they would expect to see in D&D including liches, giants and, of course, dragons. Once you are at the level cap of 70, be prepared to face the challenge of five-player dungeons like Lair of Lostmauth to face off against a red dragon. Finally, once you are prepared, work together in 10+ player Trials to face off against such planar threats like Tiamat and Demogorgon themselves!

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Imagine Giants

Storm King's Thunder artist Tyler Jacobson
contemplates a giant-sized task

Tyler Jacobson has produced some of Dungeons & Dragons most evocative and atmospheric artwork. You'll no doubt remember his powerful cover of the fifth edition *Dungeon Master's Guide*, where the archlich Acererak raises a hellish undead army, or the fiery cover of the *Player's Handbook*, where the looming fire giant King Snurre summons his terrifying hell hounds to deal with an impudent wizard.



Although he's worked for many publications like *Rolling Stone*, *Entertainment Weekly* and *Scientific American*, Tyler's first love has always been fantasy artwork and he's even provided one of the works in this issue's The Pencil is Mightier than the Sword article ([see page 16](#)). He's now turned his considerable talents to *Storm King's Thunder*, creating many of the key art works, including that tempestuous cover featuring King Hekaton, Serissa, the heir to Wyrmskull Throne, and a menacing blue dragon. *Dragon+* caught up with him to learn how he brought D&D's newest campaign to life.



Have you always been a big Dungeons & Dragons and fantasy fan?

I certainly have been a fan for a long time. I would say I was a big fan when I was young and played a lot of second edition. I sort of fell out of the game for a while because my family moved and the new location didn't have many players. After I got out of art school I started getting jobs for D&D and I soon got back into the game. It's safe to say I have become a big fan once again.



What's your process? How do you plan and design each illustration?

My process is pretty simple really. I start out with lots of small sketches to work out an overall composition. Working small ensures I will have an image that holds up from across the room. This is very useful for book covers. You want the image to pop from far away. From there I pick one that I like the most and work that up at a larger size. This would be the stage when I would send a sketch to the art director. Once I have write off on the sketch, I would either go on to create a rough color composition or straight to the final version, depending on what the client wants. Currently I work digitally but I did train in oils and I still manage to do some oil paintings every few weeks.

How would you describe your own style?

I am not sure I have an answer for that one. I enjoy getting energy and motion into my work so perhaps I would describe it as cinematic, if that is a style. I enjoy capturing moments of heightened action that tell a story.



In Storm King's Thunder, how did you try to give each giant type their own character?

This was a matter of imagining their motivations. They are almost god-like so I wanted to bring a sense of majesty but also arrogance. Having the camera look up at the Storm King was a great solution for this. I also wanted his daughters to have distinct emotions like confidence and wrath. Most of these concepts come down to pose and expression.

What's been the most rewarding part of bringing Storm King's Thunder to life?

I think it was really defining the cultures of all the giants. I worked with artist Chris Rahn and art director Richard Whitters on a three-week long session where we designed and developed each type. It was incredibly fun brainstorming various concepts about their culture and history. We worked hard to distinguish each giant in their body shapes, size, weapons and armor. This is something I really enjoy doing and the freedom we were given to develop them was really fun.



[Tell us more about the Storm King Thunder’s cover illustration – how was it produced?](#)

We were trying to capture more of a movie poster style with this cover piece. From the very start our concept was to treat this like it was a movie about the giants. The “montage” approach or “floating figures” was a great solution. The daughters of the Storm King sort of float in his shadow in order to frame their mountaintop fortress. The massive blue dragon behind the king gives clues to the story within, and the epic adventures players will go on.

[You’ve worked across many D&D properties, which ones have you most enjoyed?](#)

I would say a few of my personal favorites over the years were the Sundering character pieces I painted, the *Player’s Handbook* and

Dungeon Master's Guide covers and more recently, the cover for *Volo's Guide to Monsters*. I do a lot of work for Magic the Gathering and really enjoy working on that as well. I have done many images for other projects that aren't fantasy, but I would have to say fantasy art is where my passion is. I wouldn't trade it for any other genre.

See more of Tyler's work [on his website](#).

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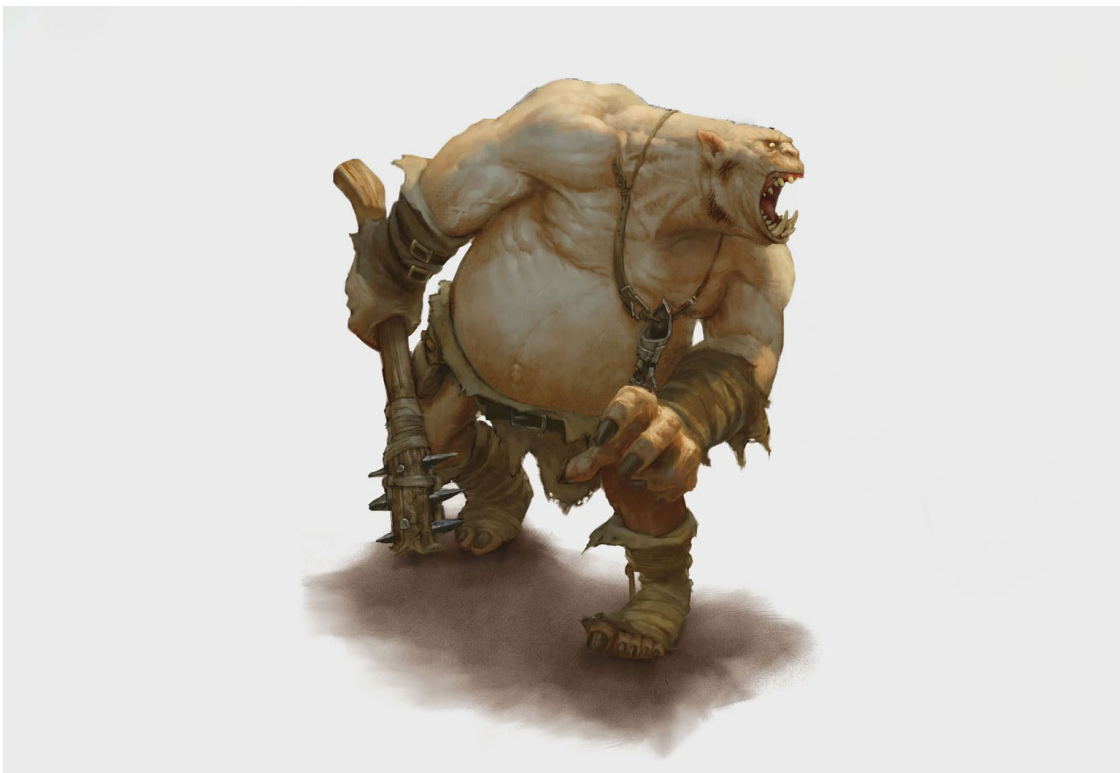
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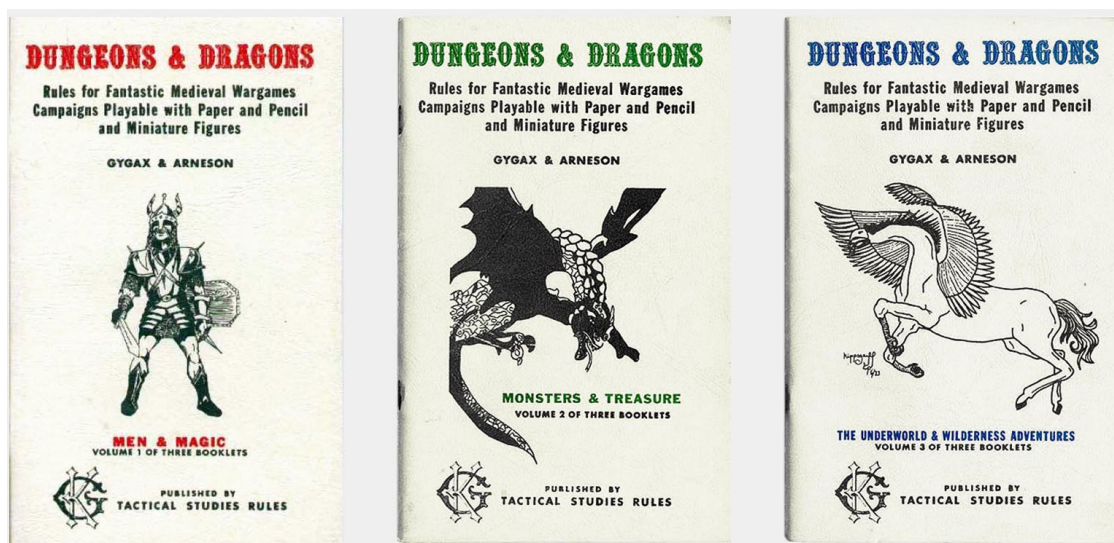
A Brief History of Giants

Giants cast a long shadow in Dungeons & Dragons

By Shannon Appelcline

Next to dragons, giants are probably the most iconic monsters in *Dungeons & Dragons*, and that goes way back — to their origins in the earliest editions of the game.

THE PRIMAL GIANTS

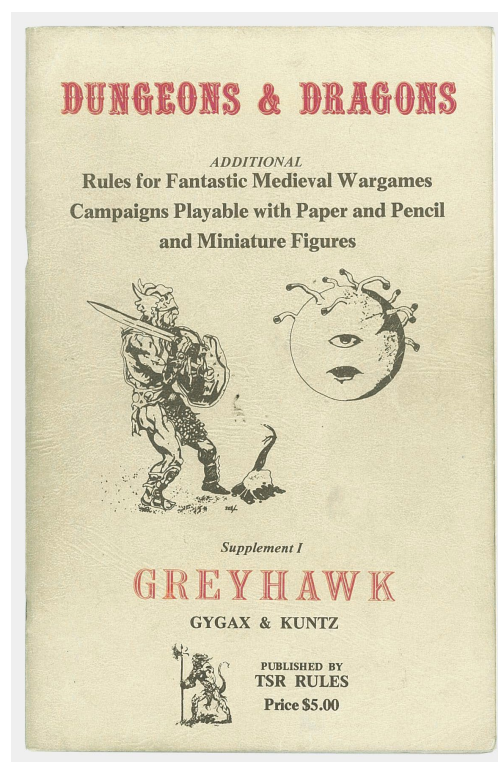


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Like the primordial dragons, the first giants sprang forth fully formed in Original Dungeons & Dragons (1974). They were laid out in a careful taxonomy containing five varieties: hill giants, stone giants, frost giants, fire giants, and cloud giants. They ran from 8 HD to 12 HD, making them mid-to-high-level opponents, as would be the case over much of their monstrous careers. Very little detail was provided in this first incarnation: stone giants could throw like catapults; frost and fire giants were impervious to their elements; and cloud giants had a keen sense of smell (which seems pretty silly, except when hunting an Englishman).

The missing family member, the storm giant, appeared in *Supplement I: Greyhawk* (1975) as a 15 HD, intelligent monster and completed the standard giant types. A few other giants appeared in the OD&D books, including a “handsome and intelligent” titan in *Greyhawk* and a dozen named Norse giants in *Supplement IV: Gods, Demi-Gods & Heroes* (1976), but they’d never achieve the longevity of the standard six.

When AD&D’s *Monster Manual* (1977) appeared, it locked the six



early giants into their standard forms; the book's expanded descriptions included more detail

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than had appeared in the OD&D game, but otherwise Gary Gygax's original giants were largely unaltered for the new AD&D game.



1978-1987

THE GIANTS OF GREYHAWK

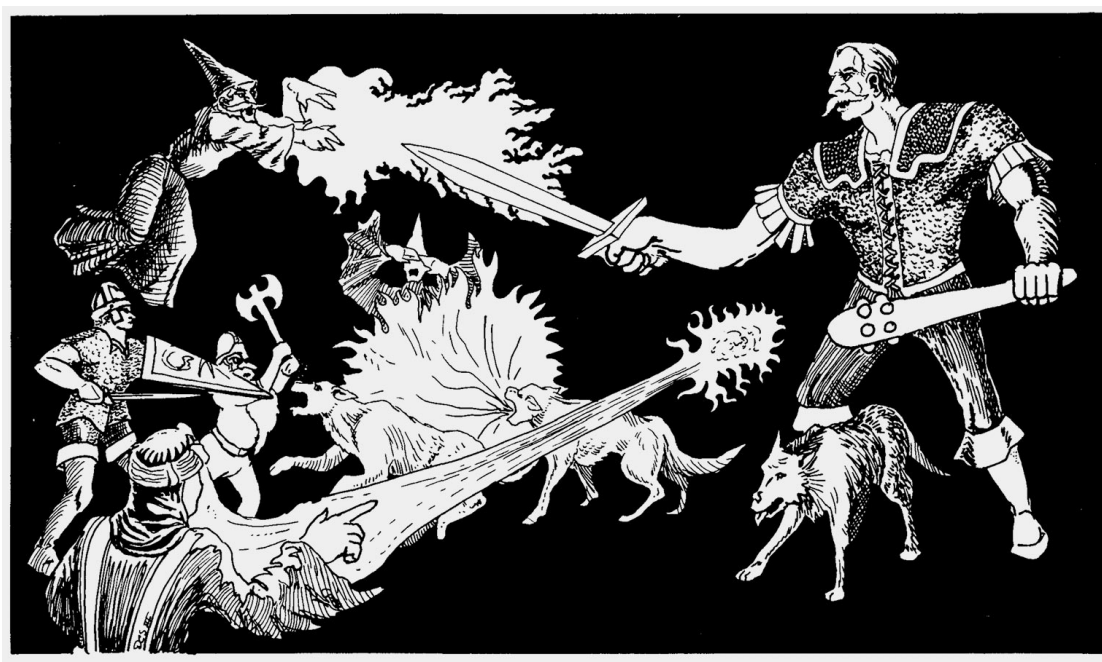
The importance of giants as monsters became apparent when TSR published the first-ever official adventures for AD&D, *G1 Steading of the Hill Giant Chief* (1978), *G2 Glacial Rift of the Frost Giant Jarl* (1978), and *G3 Hall of the Fire Giant King* (1978).



AD&D's inaugural adventures were run as the official D&D tournament modules at Origins '78 (1978) and were afterwards offered for sale. They were extremely short — running to just eight,

eight, and 16 pages long respectively — but as the titles promised, they were all about giants. To be precise, the adventures focused on the three evil giant races, which were also three of the four lowest level giants — running from the 8 HD hill giants to the 11 HD fire giants. The 9 HD stone giants were skipped, presumably because they were neutral, but D&D’s designers would remedy that lack thirty years down the road.

Giants stayed popular throughout the ‘80s, and these early scenarios were reprinted twice: as *G-1-2-3 Against the Giants* (1981) and as part of *GDQ1-7 Queen of the Spiders* (1987). Even more recently, Jason Thompson has begun creating beautiful cartoon walkthroughs (2014) of these classic adventures for Wizards of the Coast (see *Dragon+* Issue 8 [page 19](#), and this issue [page 19](#)).

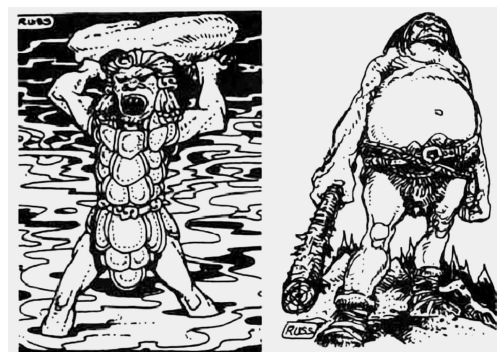


1980-1988

GIGANTIC ADVANCES

Though no giants rivaled the standard six prior to the ‘00s, TSR kept revealing new species of giants throughout the ‘80s. The *Fiend Folio* (1981) introduced two “sub-races”, the fog giant and the mountain giant. The *Monster Manual II* (1983) went further afield when it detailed the firbolg, the fomorians, and the verbeeg. They were now called “minor races” of giants; of them the verbeeg may have been the most interesting because it was the first “low level” giant, at a mere 5 HD.

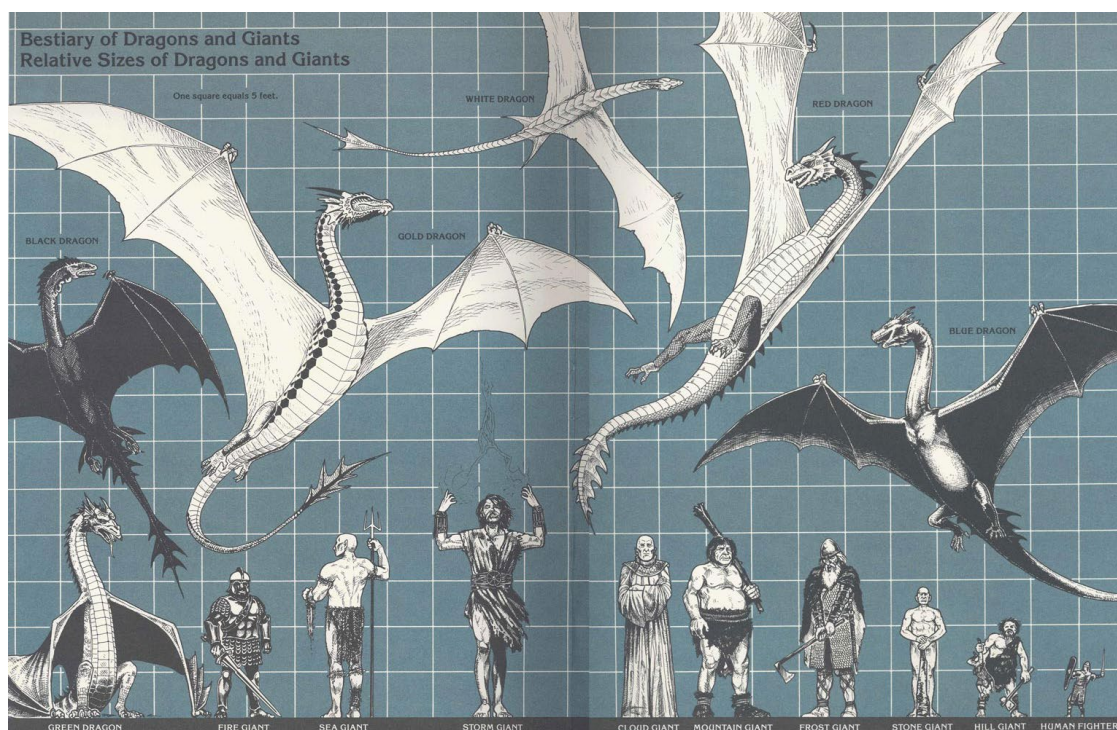
Meanwhile, Frank Mentzer's BECMI *Basic D&D* series (1983-1986) was making its own advances. The *D&D Master Rules* (1985) introduced two gigantic species of its own: the sea giant and a different mountain giant. The latter could have as many as 20 HD, making it the toughest official giant to date.



(Select to view)

Then, just as TSR reprinted AD&D's original giant adventures in *Queen of the Spiders*, it also published a brand new book of giant adventures for Basic D&D, *AC10 Bestiary of Dragons and Giants* (1987). This anthology included short lair-like scenarios that highlighted the majority of Basic D&D's giant types; its total giant-oriented page count even exceeded the 32 pages of AD&D's original giant opus!

1987 was a good year to be a giant fighter.



(Select to view)

1989-2000

THE SECOND ERA OF GIANTS

When second edition AD&D (1989) dawned, giants reappeared promptly in *Monstrous Compendium Volume One* (1989), which featured the six standard types. While dragons got big power-ups for second edition, giants saw more modest gains, with the standard giants now running from 12 HD hill giants to 19 HD storm giants. This was appropriate for their place in the D&D monster ecology: they didn't need to be all-powerful monsters like their iconic dragon counterparts.



Unsurprisingly, a number of additional giants appeared across second edition's long string of *Monstrous Compendiums*. Many of these giants — starting with the cyclops, firbolg, fomorian, and verbeeg in *Monstrous Compendium Volume Two* (1989) — were now defined as “giant-kin”. This category helped to distinguish lesser giants from the “standard” monsters, much as drakes were then being differentiated from dragons. Though some of the new giants were generic, others were setting-specific.



Though the *Monstrous Compendiums* provided many giants to fight, the species really came into their own during the second edition era thanks to several other books:

- *PHBR10 The Complete Book of Humanoids* (1993) offered the first ever official published opportunity to roleplay giants in AD&D, though only in the form of two giant-kin: the firbolg and voadkyn.
- *FOR7 Giantcraft* (1995) detailed the giant races by discussing the culture, society, magic, and religion of the giants of the Forgotten Realms. It also made another giant-kin race, the verbeeg, into a playable race.
- *Dragon* 254 (December 1998) focused on giants with many shorter articles. Most provided advice on fighting giants, but “Giants from the Grave” introduced undead giants.

Wizards of the Coast finished off the second edition era with a pair of gigantic publications: the *Greyhawk Classics* novel *Against the Giants* (1999) and the adventure *Against the Giants: The Liberation of Geoff* (1999). The latter incorporated the classic G-1-2-3 adventure

and added 18 new encounters, forming a suitably giant-sized campaign. It was a fitting, nostalgic end to the second era of giant fighting.



1990-1998

THE GIANTS OF ATHAS (AND ELSEWHERE)

Though giants were well represented in second edition AD&D's core books, its numerous settings expanded and innovated further. The spriggan and voadkyn debuted in *MC5 Monstrous Compendium Greyhawk Adventures Appendix* (1990), while the spacesea giant appeared in *MC7 Monstrous Compendium Spelljammer Appendix* (1990). *MC13 Monstrous Compendium Al-Qadim Appendix* (1992) saw the premiere of desert giants, jungle giants, and reef giants — all of whom were important enough to make it into the revamped *Monstrous Manual* (1993). The world of Dragonlance got into the act a few years later in *Dragon* 256 (February 1999), which introduced cave lords, desolation giants, earth giants, and the setting's own half-giants.

It was the *Dark Sun* (1991) world of Athas that pushed giants to the forefront. Half-giants were offered as a new player character race, and giant tribes were presented as an integral part of the setting.

However, these were new “Athasian” giants; some were humanoid, but others had the heads of beasts! As was common in *Dark Sun*, D&D standards were being reinvented.

Though the giants of Athas never got their own sourcebook, they were featured throughout the setting line. Desert and plains giants appeared in *MC12 Monstrous Compendium Dark Sun Appendix: Terrors of the Desert* (1992); the shadow giant debuted in *Dark Sun Monstrous Compendium Appendix II* (1995); and the crag giant was detailed in *Mind Lords of the Last Sea* (1996).



2000-2007

THE THIRD AGE OF GIANTS

When giants returned for third edition D&D (2000), they’d been totally rebuilt, but the standard six still filled out the *Monster Manual* (2000, 2003): cloud, fire, frost, hill, stone, and storm. Giant was now recognized as a general monster type, but that was probably the ... ahem, largest change.

More varied giants appeared in third edition’s supplements: forest, mountain, ocean, and sun giants in *Monster Manual II* (2002); bog and shadow giants in *Fiend Folio* (2003); death, eldritch, and sand giants in *Monster Manual III* (2004); and the craa’ghoran in *Monster Manual IV* (2006). In keeping with Basic D&D’s take on mountain giants, the third edition monstrosities were once again among the most powerful of beasts, coming in at 30 HD, or CR 26; meanwhile, bog giants were the puniest with 8 HD and a CR of 6. Though giants were still mid-to-high level opponents, there was a bit more variety about them in third edition.

Players who wanted to be giants were in luck during the third edition

years. Rules for playing several of the giants appeared in the *Monster Manuals*, while *Savage Species* (2003) provided rules for three more giant races. A more human-sized giant race appeared when the goliath debuted in *Races of Stone* (2004).

Third edition was the only D&D edition other than OD&D that didn't have an official giant adventure, though *The Crumbling Hall of the Frost Giant Jarl* (2002) appeared online as a tribute to the G-1-2-3 adventure, and hill giant (2006) and fire giant maps (2006) appeared in the online map-a-week feature.



2008-2013

THE FOURTH AGE OF GIANTS

34 years after D&D's first giants appeared, fourth edition D&D (2008) was the first version of the game to shake up Gygax's giant categories. Between the *Monster Manual* (2008) and *Monster Manual 2* (2009), Dungeon Masters could find stats for fire giants, frost giants, storm giants, and stone giants. The death giants and eldritch giants from third edition were also accepted as standard members of the family. Each of these giants appeared in two forms: with a paragon level stat block and a higher-level "titan" stat block. However, cloud giants were entirely gone, without so much as a "Fee Fi Fo Fum" to mark their passage, and hill giants were now incorporated into a new "earth giant" category.

Giants were also classified slightly differently in fourth edition. In third edition they had been giants, but now they were really big humanoids. In addition, some earth, fire, frost, stone, and storm giants had elemental origins; while death giants had shadow origins and eldritch giants had fey origins.

If players wanted to take on the role of giants in fourth edition, their only official option was the goliath, who reappeared in *Players Handbook 2* (2009); however if players wanted to fight giants, they were in luck! Fourth edition's first hardcover mega-adventure was *Revenge of the Giants* (2009), again showing the importance of this monster type. Players who preferred the classics could enjoy the original G-1-2-3 campaign — now revamped as four adventures, starting with “Steading of the Hill Giant Chief” in *Dungeon* 197 (December 2011) and ending with “Hall of the Fire Giant King” in *Dungeon* 200 (March 2012). If you're wondering about the fourth adventure, that was “Warrens of the Stone Giant Thane” in *Dungeon* 198 (January 2012), which filled in the gap left by Gary Gygax 33 years previously. As author Christopher Perkins said: “Stone giants got the short end of the stick. This adventure gives stone giants their moment to shine.”



2014-Present

THE MODERN AGE OF GIANTS

Fifth edition D&D (2014) returns to the basics of the game and that means the six standard giants. Cloud giants, fire giants, frost giants, hill giants, stone giants, and storm giants are back! With the d12 Hit Dice for huge opponents, giants are also more dangerous than ever — running from CR 5 hill giants to CR 13 storm giants. Ettins, fomorians, and ogres also appear as “giant kin” and every one of them is now officially a “giant”, not just a big humanoid. The fifth edition *Monster Manual* (2014) also correctly recognizes giants' place in D&D lore as an ancient race, “old as legend”.

The *Monster Manual* portrayed giants as the bitter enemies of dragons and that played out almost immediately in *Hoard of the Dragon Queen* (2014) and *The Rise of Tiamat* (2014), where players

have the opportunity to hobnob with cloud giants, and perhaps bring them in as allies against the dragons. Other recent Forgotten Realms adventures have used giants in minor roles. The stone giants of Clan Cairngorm feature in *Out of the Abyss* (2015), while players might encounter a wicker giant in *Princes of the Apocalypse* (2015) ... though that doesn't really count as true giant lore.



If players are waiting for a giant sized adventure, they won't have to wait much longer. *Storm King's Thunder* (2016) reveals that the events of *Hoard of the Dragon Queen* and *The Rise of Tiamat* have thrown giant society into chaos. With the breakdown of the ordning, giants are venturing into lands occupied by elves, dwarves and men and wreaking havoc on the smallfolk.

The heart of the adventure is a set of delves into the lairs of giantkind that even one-ups the expanded giant-slaying itinerary of the fourth edition *Dungeon* adventures. Now players may explore the lairs of each of the giant types vying for the favor of Annam, the All-Father. Even the more benevolent members of giantkind get a role, though the politicking in the hold of the Storm Giants might prove as deadly as an extremely large club.

Storm King's Thunder exposes players to the entire ordning of giants and it even touches upon the ancient giant kingdom of Ostorla, whose

fall was the beginning of the conflict with dragons that has pervaded the fifth edition.

The big question is if the smallfolk of the Realms can survive the experience.



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The Devil You Know

Read this extract from the conclusion to the
Brimstone Angels series

The Nine Hells prickled at the base of Farideh’s spine for an incongruous moment, as if she’d begun a spell, without doing any such thing—before the air around Kulaga snapped and three immense devils covered in thorns appeared. The two stone golems behind them moved forward, unarmed but for their massive granite fists.

“Shit and ashes!” Lorcan spat and drew his sword. “Kulaga, wait!”

“Laesurach!” All instinct, Farideh pointed the rod and with it pulled the vent of lava into existence, making a barrier between them and the stone golems. The guardians stepped backward, considering the sudden fountain of molten rock. Farideh turned from them to the barbed devils rushing toward them. Lorcan’s sword met the first of them, slicing deeply into its spiny shoulder. The devil threw itself into the strike though, and the barbs caught Lorcan, piercing his forearm. He cried out.

Farideh turned a blast of flames on the barbed devil. Fire splashed across it's thorny skin and it turned to regard her, as if she were flinging pebbles at it.

"This isn't what you think!" she shouted.

A second barbed devil slashed at her with its claws, catching her armor and throwing her shoulder painfully back. She threw another bolt of fire and yanked hard on the powers of the Malbolge, opening a rent in the planes and stepping back through it to reappear on the other side of the room.

"You have always lacked foresight," Kulaga chided. "Fire, fire, fire—what would Exalted Invadiah say about her feckless son imbuing his warlocks with such misdirected skills?" The logokron's forward hands filled with dark shadows. "Oh, I suppose nothing. She's rotted into the layer by now."

Fire doesn't hurt them, Farideh realized. She drew her sword, ducked under a ball of flame hurled from the nearer barbed devil's hand. The fire bolt, the rain of brimstone, the blast of eldritch energy—only the last wouldn't count as fire. One of the stone golems had sunk to its knee in the lava. The other made its way around the still burning patch of stone.

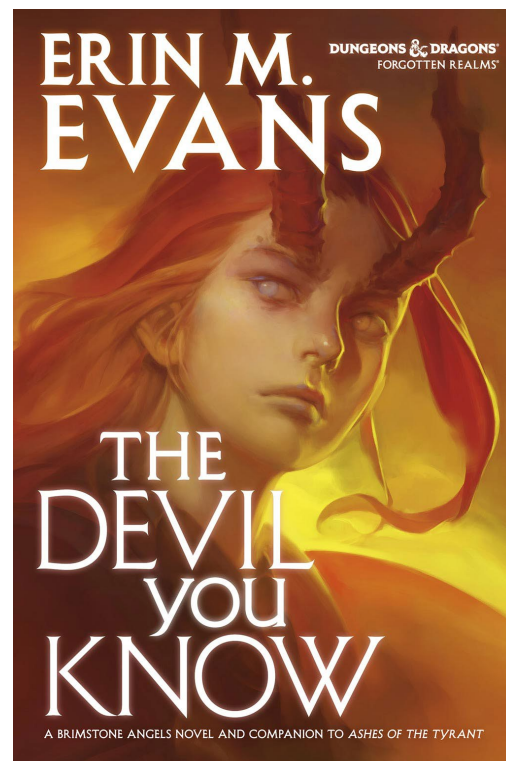
"Adaestuo!" she shouted flinging a burst of energy toward the golem. Retreating, Lorcan parried his barbed devil's claws on his silvery sword, both splattered in black blood. Farideh didn't stop to assess the source of. She held the rod parallel to the ground, perfectly still even as the barbed devils stalked toward her.

I'm sorry, she thought.

Erin M. Evans talks about the epic finale of the Brimstone Angels series

Erin M. Evans is coming to the end of a very long journey. After 2010's breakthrough *The God Catcher*, she picked up a deserved Scribe award for *Brimstone Angels*

in 2012, the first book in an acclaimed series which chronicles the adventures of Farideh, a teenaged tiefling warlock, who unwittingly forges an unholy agreement with diabolic powers. Now *The Devil You Know*, the final installment of the Brimstone Angels series is set to bring down the curtain on a saga which has absorbed over six years of her life.

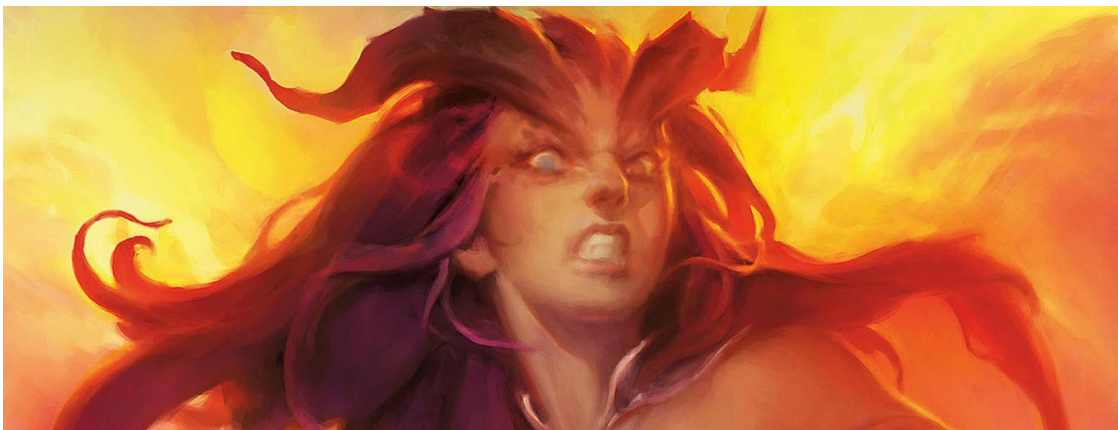


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“I enjoy outsider characters, but fantasy creates problems where we write characters who are attractive to readers, but who the rest of the world finds off-putting, even wrong,” says Evans, when considering how Brimstone Angels first came about. “But I was playing a tiefling warlock called Farideh who accidentally made a pact. Her back story never really came up in the game, but the idea eventually became Brimstone Angels. I changed almost everything about my original concept, but that was the seed.”

Want to read more of Farideh’s adventures?

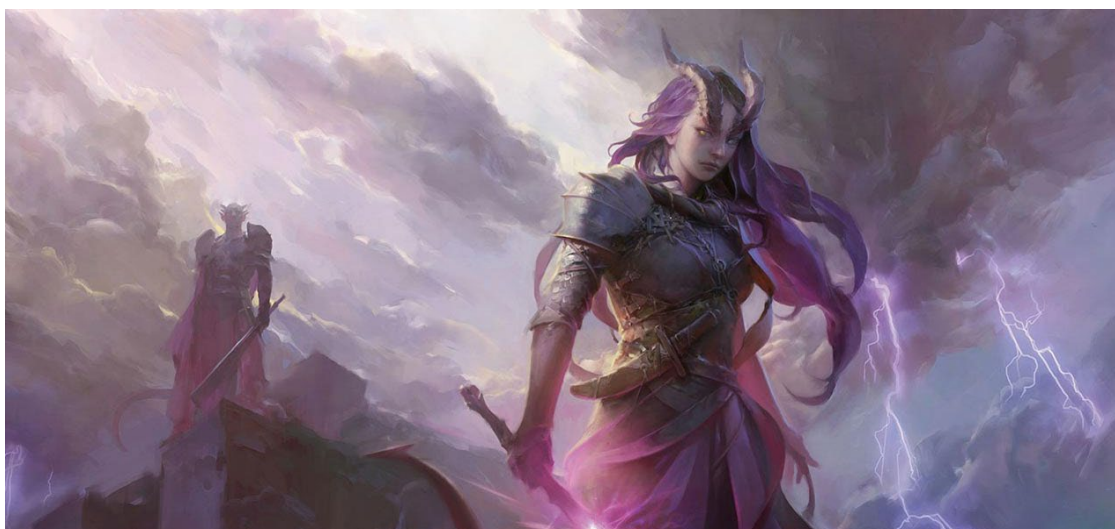
[DOWNLOAD SAMPLE CHAPTER HERE](#)



But by their very nature, aren't tieflings rather troublesome characters to write about? What drew her to a race with such diabolic heritage? Evans is unequivocal, "Tieflings are a delight because they are visually disturbing, at least at first, but they don't have an overarching culture or biology that determines their personality. With drow, for example, you get a similar reaction, but a lot of that is well-deserved! Drizzt is special because he's not like the rest of them. Farideh, on the other hand, is exactly like other tieflings."

Over the course of the series, Evans has had plenty of time and space to explore her heroine but admits that she has developed in ways that were unexpected at the outset. "Other aspects of her story arose later on. Farideh was never meant to be the Chosen of Asmodeus, but when the Sundering came up, it fit so naturally that I lobbied hard to be allowed to continue with her. I even had a second arc of stories thought up, but given this is the last book [in the series], I made them fit into *The Devil You Know*."

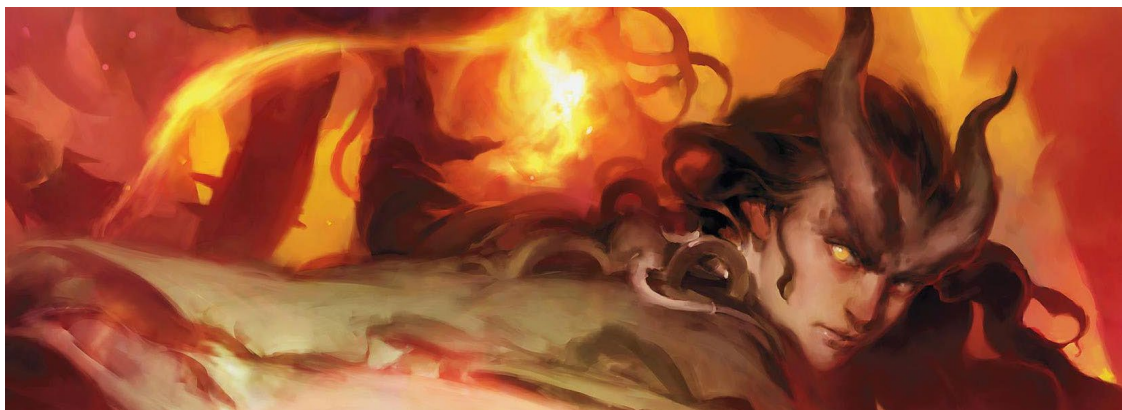
The final volume in the Brimstone Angels series represents the culmination of a long journey, but D&D came later in life to the author, who didn't play her first proper game until she was an adult. "Boys I knew were playing, but figured this wasn't something their female friends would take to. Ask your geeky girl friends to play, fellas!" Nowadays Evans' adventuring group is mostly in hiatus due to work/life balance issues, but she still considers herself an active player, "I'm a half-elf paladin who is way too good at lying for her alignment."



Evans numbers Connie Willis, Max Gladstone, and Naomi Novik amongst her favorite contemporary non-Realms authors, but says that when it comes to picking out the biggest influence on her own work, there's no simple answer. "If you're a writer who's really thinking about your craft, then everything you read probably influences you to some degree. When I first started out, I read a lot books in a lot of genres, that river of input was critical to becoming the author I am today."

After earning a degree in Anthropology from Washington University in St Louis, and working as an editor for Wizards of the Coast, Evans first made her mark with *The God Catcher*. Although familiar with the source material, she admits that setting out to work in the Forgotten Realms came with its own challenges: "It's a lot of fun if you're the kind of writer who takes inspiration from limitations. Knowing you can't change everything, the elements you can't change can imply a story in the space between them."

Yet Evans will admit that working in a shared universe has its advantages too. "I couldn't throw out the appearance of tieflings or the fact that they'd canonically changed around the Spellplague. But I could (and did) say, 'Well, okay, that happened alongside the rise of this god, so what if they were connected?' The challenges come from the same place: bumping into elements you aren't allowed to change."

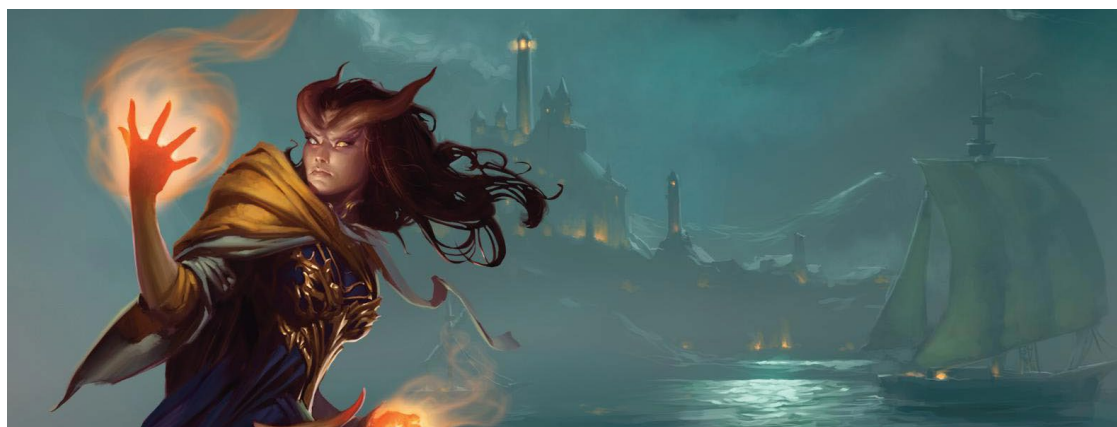


Those elements helped forge the burgeoning adventures of a tiefling warlock who has to make her way in a world that was not keen on her kind, but at least it gave her protagonist time and space to grow. "Crafting Farideh's story over six books has given me the chance to shape the character in a way that felt natural," says Evans. "This is a teenaged girl becoming an adult, she starts out anxious, impulsive,

but gets braver throughout the series, more willing to share her load, more aware of the dark side of her self. It's what fantasy does best—you can take ordinary problems and reframe them through a strange new lens."

Long-standing Brimstone Angels fans will be glad to hear that *The Devil You Know* follows straight on from *Ashes of the Tyrant* and is set to resolve that novel's cliffhanger ending." The dragonborn of Tymanther and their new god are faced with an old enemy, Havilar the captive of the Brimstone Angel, and Farideh is scrambling to find a way to save her—while trying to solve the puzzle of Asmodeus and Azuth.

"When I started Brimstone Angels, the intent was for an ongoing series, more like the Legend of Drizzt, than the usual trilogies," continues Evans. "That includes knowing that the last book might come at any time. I planned for the worst and hoped for the best, and got something in-between." Evans was insistent that readers and fans would get proper closure though and *The Devil You Know* is also set to answer some of the series most intriguing questions. "Who are Farideh and Havilar's birth parents? How did they get to Arush Vayem? What does Dahl's prophecy mean...?"



Yet bringing down the curtain comes with a sweet sorrow all of its own and Evans admits contemplating the ending has brought an occasional tear to her eye. "It's hard. These characters have been my constant companions for seven years. I'm grateful to readers who gave a new series a chance and came along for the ride. I will always miss these characters, the next stories I tell have big shoes to fill." Ultimately Evans finds she has few regrets about concluding the story here, but will say that, "There are so many smaller characters that I

wish I'd gotten to write stories about or from the perspective of: Vescaras Ammakyl, Lady Varauna Goldfeather, Sessaca Peredur, Oota, Vanri..."

But as one door closes another opens and writers, like sharks, have to swim ever forward. Evans already has new work planned to replace the "fat book a year" she has gotten used to producing. "I have a story in an anthology *Hath No Fury* coming out from Ragnarok Press that serves as an introduction to my current novel project. 'The Mark of a Mountain Poppy' features animalistic spirits, a prince with a gift of prophecy, and a badass warrior woman with a sword made out of obsidian."

A brand new novel also represents a brand new start but what else does the future hold for the author? "This is only the beginning. I have so many plans! A lot of projects [have been] waiting for me to have time, and now I do! Readers can check out my blog at www.slushlush.com, I have an [author page on Facebook](#) and I'm on Twitter @erinmevans." We have no doubt there's plenty more to come from the redoubtable Ms. Evans, whichever new worlds she chooses to explore.

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Making the Mold

Miniatures have always been an important part of Dungeons & Dragons. Players' imaginations are certainly the most powerful forces in the game, but there's no better way of bringing encounters to life, than seeing your characters face off against a set of beautifully sculpted monsters.

WizKids have been making miniatures for over 15 years, and accompanying the release of Storm King's Thunder it has produced a brand new 44 figure set, which features figures like King Hekaton,

Chief Guh and the Thri-kreen. You may already have seen them deployed in the ongoing adventures of Force Grey: Giant Hunters, where they've provided a **physical counterpoint to Matthew Mercer's creative Dungeon Mastering.**

We sat down with WizKids' art director Fred Rugar to learn how 2D concept art is transformed into 3D D&D icons.

How is a mini first conceived? What happens during the initial design phase?

We spend a good amount of time on the pre-production for each set. Wizards of the Coast (WotC) supplies us with amazing concept art for the characters and creatures and we sort through it, assembling reference packets that put all the information for each sculpt into a single PDF file. This contains art, a palette of paint colors, some pose concepts and images of the character from various views.

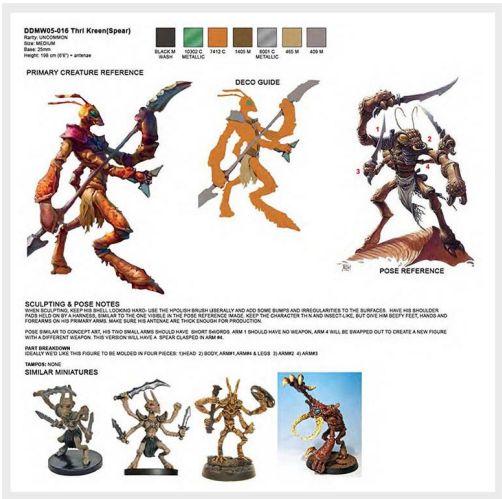
The pre-production phase is where we really spend time balancing faithfulness to the source material, the realities of molding and production, and the desire to make outstanding miniatures. We want our sculptors to really concentrate on the forms, the details, and the personality of the figures, without having to worry about all the technical aspects of production.

We spend a good bit of time considering the poses we want for each figure – we try to plan for poses that have some action or drama, or poses that convey a mood or personality for the character, while making sure the figures work with the realities of molding and assembly. We also spend a lot of time selecting color palettes that work within an overall palette of colors for the entire set.

TriKeen Concept Sheet

How do you develop the prototype and move on to making the actual sculpt?

The fun part is the sculpting, we sculpt all of the characters digitally on computers using zBrush with pressure-sensitive tablets. It's very similar to



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working with clay, but we have a lot more flexibility to adjust and edit as we progress. The first phase is creating a neutral t-pose of the character and we concentrate on the forms and details trying our best to translate all the 2D illustrations into 3D.

The second phase involves breathing life into its pose. We tell our sculptors to think about the character they’re posing – to add more emotion and mood to the action. We want them to always use their imaginations, if a creature is attacking, we want them to imagine the rage, and carry those feelings into the tension of the limbs. If they’re sculpting a paladin gazing upwards towards the heavens, we want them to put strength, confidence and humility into his stance. If a wizard is casting a spell, we want to feel the energy and experience the awe as the magic courses through the character’s body.



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How do you achieve the final finish?

We paint the sculptures digitally during the sculpting process in order to give the production factories guides for how the manufactured figures need to be painted – the digital painting is actually a pretty easy part of the job. The real hard work is done by the people who work in the factories and do the production – they deserve all the credit for the final product. All of the figures are painted by hand using a combination of brushes and sprays, drybrushing and washes. They work very hard trying to make each figure match the guides we send them and they do an amazing job. It's really remarkable to see the detail they are able to achieve. It's incredible to see a room full of people painting huge piles of tiny miniatures.



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D&D Paint Guide

Things have changed quite radically from D&D's original lead and pewter figures. What are the main differences in modern mini making?

Sculpting digitally, we're able to do a lot of work much faster than traditional sculpting. We have the freedom to experiment with things quickly and revert back if a change isn't working. Now, sculptors can be fearless and try anything they want – if they change their minds, they don't have to peel off clay and start from scratch. Everything is better with an Undo option. We can also zoom in on a sculpt and add a lot of detail that might be difficult with hand sculpting. It also helps that we can send files in minutes instead of having to send one-of-a-kind original sculpts, praying something doesn't get lost or damaged

in the mail. All of our miniatures are now manufactured with plastic instead of lead and our collections weigh significantly less and are easier to move around. We could even lick them if we wanted, but I wouldn't advise that. Really, who wants to lick a kobold anyway?



The giants in the Storm King's Thunder set are very large compared to standard-sized minis. What advantages and indeed challenges does this bigger scale bring?

All the sculptors love working on big miniatures and it gave us a chance to create more detail, texture and subtlety in the figures than we would normally include in smaller miniatures. It means that each figure tends to take more time to sculpt. We try to pay a lot more attention to the subtleties on the larger sculpts, and that can be challenging when trying to meet production deadlines. Big miniatures also come with big expectations on the part of the players. They really want to see impressive sculptures when miniatures are this large and we're hoping that they will be pleased with the results.

How have you tried to really bring out the individual character of each giant type?

A lot of the credit goes to the concept designers at WotC. Their reimagined concepts for the new giants really help set them apart

from other minis. They have unique physiques that set the giant types apart from one another and really give you some insight into their natures from the cool aloofness and casual grace of the cloud giants, to the bulk and earthiness of the hill giants, and the fury and power of the storm giants. Their size helps retain a lot of the subtle details of the faces and the poses. On a smaller miniature, that subtlety would have gotten lost and she would have had less personality.

King Hekaton, Chief Guh, and the Thri-kreen really caught our eye. Can you tell us a little more about the making of those minis?

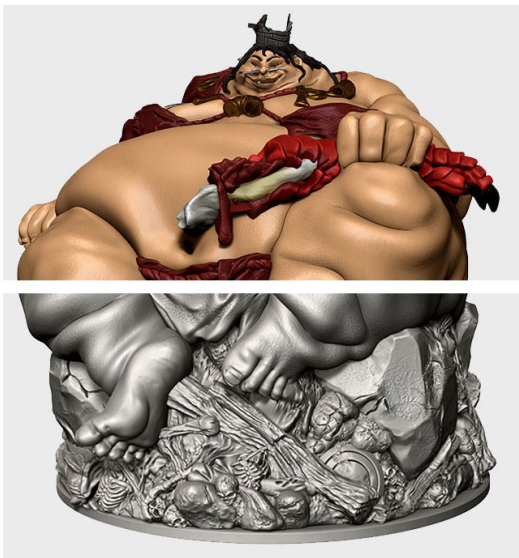
The Thri-kreen is one of my favorite sculpts from the set and he was also one of the most challenging. The concept art has all these little bumps and spikes and irregularities that make it come to life. We spent a lot of time trying to capture all those bits and pieces, but when we posed the figure, all those arms and little spikes sticking out this way and that ended up making him look really cool, but impossibly difficult to manufacture.



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We had to spend a couple of solid days looking at the figure and making some adjustments. We didn't make big, radical changes or we would have lost a lot of the coolness of the pose. We evaluated each limb one by one and adjusted the position and rotation of his limbs and weapons and tweaked and adjusted the angles of the spikes based on how they would have to align in order to be able to release from the molds. A huge amount of time and thought went into Thri-kreen and we're quite proud of that particular sculpt.

Chief Guh was a really challenging sculpt. Several sculptors worked on various phases of its development. It was difficult to capture her particular personality and each sculptor that



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contributed brought out different elements. Her sculpt in particular was a great example of the way WotC really supports our work. The first pass on her was very evil and monstrous. WotC gave us some feedback and sent us a really fantastic closeup image of her face

with this great big smile that completely changed our whole perception of the character. She stopped being a generic monster and suddenly had a personality and everything just fell into place. The sculptor that finished off that piece did a fantastic job capturing this discovered personality and we're really pleased with the result. Don't get us wrong; she'll still probably try to chomp your party up like a handful of popcorn, but she'll do it with glee rather than malevolence.

King Hekaton was not an easy sculpt either. He's the giant who keeps all the others in check and maintains order, so we needed to make sure he was not just big, but he had a powerful mass. We gave a wide, impressive bulk to his body and even his hair and beard are like massive cloud formations. Our goal with this sculpt was to capture a quiet, commanding power, like the still before a storm of fury.

What makes the perfect mini?

The perfect mini is not about its size, it's not about the level of detail, it's not about the drama or the action of the pose, it's not even about the faithfulness to the source art. It's all about life and imagination. If a mini comes to life and has personality, it's a perfect mini. If a mini sparks a player's imagination, it's a perfect mini. If our miniatures can help bring a player's imagination to life, then we've done our jobs well and we can relax in a pub and trade stories by the fire.

What's next for WizKids? What other D&D figures and projects are you working on?

Oh, you can only imagine what's coming next...



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Neverwinter

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DUNGEONS & DRAGONS



Best of the DMs Guild

Prepare to uncork the Wizard in a Bottle and encounter the stylish but deadly wardancer.

Welcome to our second delve into the **Dungeon Masters Guild**, where a host of adventures, campaigns and user-created content await. Since its inception, hundreds of Dungeons & Dragons fans have designed a wealth of adventures and character archetypes for the Forgotten Realms, and each month we'll be shining a spotlight on the very best of them.

This month's offerings are *Wizard in a Bottle*, a classic tower exploration mystery-adventure, which offers some interesting roleplaying options and *The Wardancer*, a fighter archetype with a fluid, dexterous attacking style.

Wizard in a Bottle, is set in Neverwinter and is designed to be played in a single session of between four and six hours. Your party is

introduced to Ulfgar Longwood, a member of the once renowned Crimson Company and he wants you to seek out Amilya Grayheart, a fondly remembered colleague, who disappeared more than 20 years ago while exploring a mysterious sorcerer's tower. Longwood would like you to discover what happened to Amilya, and if possible, recover her remains, and he is prepared to pay handsomely. But this is one assignment that is set to prove a tough challenge for up to four second level characters.

You'll be able to sample *Wizard in a Bottle* yourself, as all *Dragon+* readers can download and enjoy the adventure free with our exclusive access code. But before you hasten to claim your free copy, let's have a chat with MT Black, *Wizard in a Bottle*'s creator, to learn more about the making of his adventure.



Meet MT Black, creator of *Wizard in a Bottle*

When did you start playing D&D and who would you say are your biggest influences?

I started playing when I was about 12 years old, initially using Moldvay Basic and then later on AD&D. My biggest influences in those days were Gary Gygax and Tom Moldvay – I loved their adventures! Later on I became a great fan of Ed Greenwood when the Forgotten Realms were released. Outside of D&D, I learned a lot from the early games that Greg Costikyan designed. More recently, I've really enjoyed the work of Rich Baker, Chris Perkins, Richard Pett, Matt Finch, and Michael Curtis. I think my approach to adventure design has been heavily influenced by the "Old School" analysis James Maliszewski did back in the day. Zak Sabbath makes my brain hurt, but he stretches me creatively.

Are you more of a Dungeon Master or player? What kind of DM are

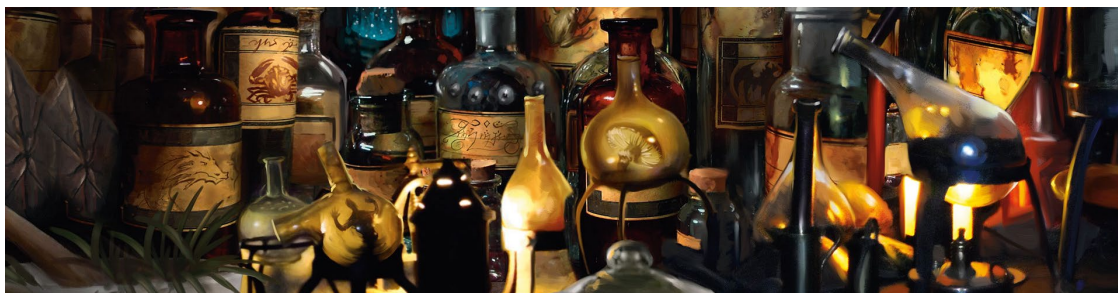
you?

I am the perpetual DM! Over 30 years of D&D experience, I think I've only played about five times. I enjoy DMing because it gives me the chance to create worlds and stories. In terms of style, I like to keep the action fast-flowing in my games – stopping to look something up is an anathema. I do everything I can to keep people “in the moment” while playing – that is, to maintain the suspension of disbelief. I try to reward imaginative and creative play, so I'm more than happy to fudge the rules to reward a good idea. One other fact is that I'm quite a gentle DM – I've very rarely killed any characters in my long career running the game!

How did the idea for Wizard in a Bottle come about? Tell us about the making of the adventure.

I tend to read a lot of old adventures for inspiration. I was looking at *Bottle City* by Rob Kuntz and thinking that a bottle-themed adventure of some sort would be interesting. The phrase “Wizard in a Bottle” came to me then, and I thought it was a great title. But I had no plot for it.

I also read a lot of plot seeds and adventure hooks – I have several thousand on my cloud drive. I came across a plot seed at this time based on the classic “Human Popsicle” trope – the protagonist is caught in suspended animation for a few years, then returns home to find his spouse has remarried. It's a favorite in sci-fi shows, but I don't recall seeing it in any fantasy adventures. My “ah-ha” moment was bringing the title and the plot seed together – this formed the genesis of the adventure. After that it was just (!) a case of designing the encounters. It actually all came together very quickly in the end.



What was your favorite or most memorable part to design? My favorite room might be the Cabinet of Curiosities in the underground lab. I was flicking through Wikipedia and came across an article about the *Museum Wormianum*, and instantly knew I

wanted to include it in my adventure. Looking back on the encounter as written, I'm a bit disappointed that I didn't flesh it out more effectively, as it is really vivid in my mind. At any rate, it is still much more interesting than the old storeroom that location was originally meant to be!

Another part I really like is the climactic fight in the alchemy lab. In the first release of the adventure there was no real conflict in this room. One of the early purchasers told me that this was a weak climax to the dungeon, and I agreed. We then workshopped a couple of ideas in the comments section on the DMs Guild. One of his ideas inspired something, and I updated the adventure that evening. The wonders of modern digital publishing!

How do you approach designing and placing encounters, monsters and NPCs?

Big questions! There are two things I'm trying to do when I design a set of encounters. The encounters need to be very consistent with one another and with the overall setting, in order for the players to maintain their suspension of disbelief. If the elements seem implausible, it brings people right out of the story experience. So for each monster I answer these questions – why are they here? How do they eat, drink and even defecate? What do they do all day? How do they interact with the other monsters? If I can give plausible answers to all of these questions, then the dungeon as a whole is coherent.

At the same time, I want variety and contrast with the encounters – especially with short adventures that may only have nine or ten encounters in them. So I'll go through monster and encounter lists, looking for strong affinities but also for different encounter types that might work in the setting, such as a trap, a puzzle, or a problem to solve. If I can achieve that internal consistency alongside a strong variety of encounters, I am usually on the way to creating a good adventure.

For NPCs, I came up with a few tables a while ago that generate good personalities and appearances, and I've also devised large lists of Realms-compatible names. I turned this into a product on the DMs Guild called *15,000 NPCs*. When I need an NPC, I literally go through that very same product looking for the right fit. You don't have much space in a short adventure to develop an NPC's

personality – usually you have to grab one trait and really emphasize it. Magic items I struggle with a bit – I think I’m a bit stingy with them. Perhaps some of your readers can give me some advice!



The first half of Wizard in a Bottle is a classic exploration adventure, but the second part is an interesting roleplaying challenge. Do you think opportunities for pure roleplaying are sometimes a neglected part of design?

Most of the adventures I’ve designed with a strong roleplaying element have had the roleplaying up front and then the dungeon-crawl/combat at the end as a sort of climax. The “Human Popsicle” plot seed gave me the chance to switch this around a bit, which I thought was interesting and different.

I do like how it turned out – it’s a gentle resolution, and can be quite funny if played right. I think it works because the characters are quite invested in the welfare of the protagonist by that stage of the story. I recently saw a Twitch stream of this adventure where the DM simply cut the whole second half out, and I can understand that decision.

I think opportunities for non-combat roleplaying are sometimes a little neglected in D&D. The recent proliferation of high quality live play sessions on YouTube has been helpful in this regard, as it shows you how pure roleplaying encounters should be handled. The entire area of urban adventures is also still very undeveloped in D&D. Everyone can easily name the great dungeon crawls and wilderness treks from the history of the game, but I bet very few people can name a great adventure based around an urban setting (aside from *Village of Hommlet*, which still had a dungeon crawl at the end).

You've plenty of other adventures on the DMs Guild – can you tell us a little about some of them? Any others you'd particularly recommend to *Dragon+* readers?

For people who are still fairly new to the game, I'd recommend my adventure *Tower of the Mad Mage*. It currently has straight five-star reviews, and the feedback I've received is that everyone has a ton of fun with it, and it's very easy to play. If you are up for a bit more work and something much darker, I think *Shadows on the Long Road* may be my most well-crafted effort to date. It was inspired by a Clark Ashton Smith story and also contains a few hints of Tom Moldvay's *Castle Amber*. Not one for the kids, though! If you are after something more roleplaying heavy and a bit different, I've just put out an adventure called *King of the Cats* which is set in Neverwinter. I'd love to get your feedback on that, as I think it's quite different to most D&D adventures.



What advice would you give people wanting to design and release adventures on the DMs Guild?

Improve your writing skills! Great ideas will be spoiled by poor writing.

Become familiar with other adventures, especially the classics. I read

adventures, new and old, all the time. You will learn a lot about the craft of adventure writing by doing this.

Use tools. I recommend the *Tome of Adventure Design* by Matt Finch. The tools in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* are also excellent. As I mentioned above, I also collect as many plot seeds as I can find.

Keep it short. One of the best adventures on the DMs Guild, *Death in the Cornfields*, is just three pages long! Create an adventure with six or seven encounters, put it up on the DMs Guild, and learn from the feedback.

What's does the future hold for you? What other new material are you working on?

I have many more adventures yet to come, and I've recently started collaborating with others. I'll soon be releasing a classic Walking Dead-style adventure which I co-wrote with an Origins award-winning game designer. It's a lot of fun and has a good dose of horror too – I think people will enjoy it. There's another adventure I'm currently working on with a very talented young writer I came across on the DMs Guild – the adventure takes place within Ivy Mansion at Longsaddle, and is looking really interesting. And I've also just started work on a giant-themed adventure, in keeping with the imminent release of *Storm Kings Thunder*. And I have about a million more ideas after those ones are done...



The Wardancer

A martial archetype for the fighter class

“Strength, stamina and a thick layer of armor are the best friends of most fighters. These warriors charge straight into the fray, overwhelming all who stand against them with sheer martial power. Some fighters do not wish to walk down that path. They prefer to trust in hard-won skill and speed, eschewing the use of heavy armor.”

These men and women follow the path of the wardancer.

Like a whirling tornado of death the lightly armored wardancers leap across the battlefield. Their blades, swifter than the eye can follow, cut down enemy after enemy. Fighters following this archetype strike quickly and efficiently, retreating to safety before the enemy has time to react. The wardances, secret techniques of footwork, body posture and precise movements, are passed down from generation to generation, taught to the most talented pupils and recruits of military orders, dueling academies and gladiatorial schools alike.”

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Short Fiction

A Man & His Dog

Bart Carroll

A dark line flowed from Beliard mirroring the tendrils of smoke rising above—a steady flow of refugees traveling from the village toward Amphail and from there on to Waterdeep. Judging from the jumbled possessions they hauled—by draft horses and mules, milk cows and even goats, or upon their own backs for those souls whose animals hadn’t survived the giant’s fire—they represented all stations and professions, now alike homeless and with faces dirty from soot.

They made a truly forlorn parade. Gibbet had witnessed more of their kind in recent days, sadly. While the rest of his patrol dealt with incursions further south, the ranger had been sent as an advance scout to Beliard; so now, only Gibbet and his own animals walked alone against the exodus, keeping to the side of the road away from the wheels of their carts.

He’d made the same walk from his own village. Just a child then, the only survivor of the giant’s destruction of Catherine’s Crossing. His

heart now went out to the children he passed, confused and huddled atop of carts; or for those old enough to walk, bent under small, desperate packs, filled with whatever clothes and prized possessions they had enough time to grab before their village fell. One small boy, the sooty limbs of a stuffed owlbear poking out from his pack, stared over at Gibbet.

With a whistle, Gibbet had his dog blink through the air; Blencan appeared a few steps back down the road, running to catch back up. The trick earned a hint of smile from the boy.

Only a few of the refugees Gibbet passed bothered to call out: “Don’t go back. Nothing’s left,” they said, if they mistook him for a fellow villager. Or: “It’s all burned. Nothing for you to steal,” if they took him for an early looter. Or, if they caught sight of the green brooch fastening his cloak with its emblem of a stag, and took him for a hero: “No one left for you to save.”

As for the dog at Gibbet’s heels, the refugees paid it little mind. Blencan didn’t bother any of their animals walking past, and a man could make good use of a dog out here by himself, whether he be villager, pillager, or hero (or as the ranger had otherwise heard it said: *displaced, disgraced, or true*); even a dog that took to blinking in and out of the world. The birds, however—Gibbet’s birds were far more noticed, landing everywhere along the ranger’s shoulders, even along his dog’s back when he blinked back in: sparrows, swallows, even a hawk with red-tipped feathers.

“Why so many birds?” they asked. “Even Bahamut stopped at seven.”



Tattered and frayed, a herald would still recognize Gibbet’s cloak as an old banner. A historian would be needed to identify the village it once hung over, though. Catherine’s Crossing had never been particularly noteworthy. Sir Catherine founded the place at the end of her adventuring days; a crossroads village on the edge of the Dessarin Hills, where she decided to put her warhorse to stud and hang all criminals delivered to her within an iron gibbet cage.

Twelve years later, after her son had been born, Catherine liked to

joke that she never actually retired from adventuring, that it just took so long to remove full plate armor (also why, her husband complained, they only had the one son). She hadn't named her son after the village's cage, of course; she hadn't nicknamed him that either, even though he would take to scaling its tree, growing bold enough to climb over and stand on top of the bars. More than once, she'd caught him up there talking to the criminals inside and threatened to lock him in with them as punishment.

Gibbet said he'd wanted to hear their dark tales of banditry. "Ah, but they got nothing to say anyhow," he complained, after she'd finally drag him down at the end of a billhook. "They just kept asking for water."

He'd lost whatever name his mother had originally given him. Gibbet had only taken up this new name from when his rescuers finally arrived, three days after Catherine's Crossing had been burned to the ground.

His mother had taken far less than twelve years to put her armor back on, not that it had done any good. She told her son to find a safe place to hide. And where else would be the safest place he could think of; he took her keys and climbed to the gibbet. Unlocked it, and crawled inside.

Three days he hid there among the bodies. Almost stayed with them forever, if not for rangers arriving in the green cloaks of the Emerald Enclave, finally drawn to the smoke.

"You! There in the gibbet! You alive in there, lad?"

The lad in the gibbet cage, they took to calling him. Then finally just *Gibbet*. He didn't speak much at first. When they asked what happened to Catherine's Crossing, he didn't answer and they didn't press. The only hint came when he took up the bow with them, keeping his village banner for a cloak instead of the emerald, and volunteered for any patrol involving the threat of giants.



At the edge of Beliard, Gibbet released his share of birds into the air: sparrows, led by the red-tipped hawk. Every building was still on fire

or had already burned and collapsed, but taking guidance from his birds overhead, Gibbet picked a path through the wreckage, Blencan at his heels.

“We’re being followed, boy.”

Around them, shadows converged from the edges of the burning buildings. Gibbet sensed them preparing to strike, to drag them both down—until Blencan blinked away. The remaining birds still clinging to the dog’s back scattered, taking off in a startled flock.

The blink dog reappeared a few yards away, and sprinted off. All at once, the shadows emerged as hell hounds, a ferocious pack barking fire. They gave chase after Blencan.

Gibbet continued, now unopposed, following his own birds toward the village square. Blencan would be fine on his own, he knew; they’d hunted this way before... not that he still wouldn’t worry for his dog’s safe return.



He’d been with the Emerald Enclave several years when they investigated an attack on another settlement, this one within the High Forest. An elven village razed, same as Catherine’s Crossing.

“This was no orc raid,” his patrol confirmed with one another, walking through the remains. Old Seaven, their Autumnreaver, agreed. “Orcs don’t snap trees in half. And their boots aren’t so big as to crush a man,” he added, pointing to a print on the ground.

“Gibbet?” Marros Summerstrider, second in the patrol, asked. “What happened back in that cage of yours, lad? Same as here, wasn’t it?”

“Leave him be. You know he can’t answer about that.”

However few words he shared within the Emerald Enclave, Gibbet communed better with the animals in his care. His mother had raised hunting dogs, bred from a favorite pair she kept alongside her on campaigns; they wore barding, as if half-knights themselves in Sir Catherine’s own image. It had been Gibbet’s chore to help raise the litters; and however much he mourned the rest of his village, it was the death of their dogs that Gibbet had taken hardest of all.

When the patrol dispersed into the forest looking for survivors, Gibbet chose a path off by himself. Listening to the birdsongs led him deep among the trees... but not so deep that he still didn't come upon more evidence of the attacker's destruction.

The dogs lay everywhere burned, many nearly to ash. An entire pack slain, like his, and for the first time since Catherine's Crossing, Gibbet knelt and shed tears.

He heard the whimper from within a massive oak. There were no hollows or cracks, no cavities exposed into the heartwood; the tree was old but healthy. Gibbet had to chop for most of the day with his hand axe to open its trunk. Inside, he found the whelp within the smallest of crevices. There was simply no way for it to have been placed there.

"Blink dog," Seaven told him, when Gibbet returned cradling the shaking whelp under his cloak. "And there was no opening into the tree, you say?"

"Not possible," the others agreed, even for a blink dog—they had to at least see where it was they could blink. "Most likely an entrance you didn't spot. Some tunnel leading up through the roots."

But Gibbet knew he hadn't missed any entrance.

Old Seaven laid a hand on his shoulder. "The dying wish of its mother, then. They are magical creatures—a blessing of Mielikki, to be sure. Bring him with you for now, I suppose... you may be interested to know, we've coaxed out other survivors."

Not many, and badly off—but a few of the elves had escaped into the trees and returned to relate what they'd seen. "Giant," Seaven confirmed to the rest of the patrol when they'd all reconvened. "It was a fire giant came through and razed the village. It was the giant's hell hounds what set the fires here—" To Gibbet, he added: "—and killed your whelp's pack."

"What did it want?" Gibbet asked; a rare question from the young ranger.

Marros next to him shrugged. "The giant? Ask why lightning strikes

a tree, or a storm wrecks a ship. Most times, just to destroy something weaker than itself.”

Only here, it turned out the giant had come with a purpose. The elves told them about the ancient shield in their temple, supposedly forged by Corellon Larethian himself, and how the giant went for it straightaway. Gibbet thought of his mother’s own plate. Enchanted, she’d claimed. What a giant would want with the armaments of much smaller warriors though, none of them could guess.

“They say the giant had a great red beard,” Marros added. “Like a flame—as with most fire giants, of course—only this one tinged darker red at the ends of his whiskers, as if dipped in blood. That something you might recollect, lad? This the same giant that did your village?”

Gibbet turned away, cradling the whelp. He still didn’t answer, but truth was, he remembered every moment hidden amongst the bodies of the prisoners, their almost-dead fingers groping for him and the water never received. After the prisoners finally stilled, he remembered the giant peering into the cage. Gibbet had been too weak by then to even try and play dead himself; he could only stare back with the eyes of a dead man already until the giant with the blood-tinged beard strode off, carrying away his mother’s breastplate.



Beliard’s square had been built around its public well, a long, flat space where cattle were brought in to trade; with Beliard’s fall, its well had been filled with burning rubble and a beaten iron cage set over it as if a spit. Captured within the cage, town elders cooked over the smoldering fires below. The ones in front had already perished, their faces cracked from the heat, blackened from the smoke; whatever holy symbols they’d clutched and prayed to had melted in their hands. But they insulated a few survivors behind. They had little voice left to call out, but reached hands and fingers through the bodies toward Gibbet.

The ranger stood at the far end of the square. Waiting. He could feel the waves of heat as the fires burned around him. Overhead, his birds continued to wheel and turn.

When the fire giant arrived, it was by kicking through the side of a partially collapsed building—an inn, the Watchful Knight. Gibbet remembered the sight of him, although the giant’s armor had since gained new pieces: his mother’s breastplate, the elves’ shield, countless more refashioned into the scales of his armor; a patchwork suit, but thick, and solid. Gorgets were remade into the giant’s rings; an articulated cloak of gorgon scales draped over one arm, affixed at the shoulder with an anvil for a clasp; and for a helm, a witch’s great cauldron rested atop his head, holes punched through for his eyes and his great, bristling beard exploding from out the bottom edge.

Bloody-beard, the giant had since been named, a moniker invented by Gibbet’s patrol. He went to the cage without bothering to look over, speaking in his own guttural tongue—the sound of rocks splitting and crude molten words spilling forth.

“No, I did not escape from your cage,” Gibbet answered back. He’d long studied the giants’ tongue, finding it useful to read their maps and plans, and track down their kind. “I escaped from another one like it, years ago.”

Bloody-beard laughed. “And you think yourself wondrous, then?” The giant took up his weapon, a triple-flail with the skulls of three different metallic dragon for its heads. He swung the flail back and forth, crossing the square in long strides. “You are a mote left to be stamped out. But will it be by the copper, the silver, or the gold?”

Gibbet dodged the flail, as its dragon heads smashed against the building behind. The prisoners cried out from their cage as the burning wall collapsed into the square, a granary split wide, showering them with burning dust.

Bow in hand, Gibbet rolled back to his feet.

“Now here’s a riddle,” Bloody-beard laughed. “What’s an archer without an arrow!”

It was true; Gibbet carried no quiver. But at his signal, the birds overhead turned toward the giant.



Blencan led the hell hounds on a manic run. He would dart one way,

blink, and suddenly be off in another direction. Around burning houses, and stables, and stores. The hounds chased after, running hard and heavy. Their breath came in ragged, smoky gout. Whenever one would pause to belch out its flaming breath, licking fire over the ground, and stones, and charred timber, none of it would catch Blencan. And overhead, racing along, followed his own share of birds—swallows, a flock of them, flying fast and low.

When Blencan turned a corner and started across an open stretch of field, the hounds knew they had him. Even as the birds dove towards them, the hounds paid them no mind.

Only, when the birds fell, they fell as arrows. With swallow feathers for fletching, and beaks formed into sharpened steel arrowheads.

Many of the hounds fell at once, riddled with arrows. Their internal fires flared, consuming hound and arrows alike. More hounds pulled up lame, shot through their backs, and haunches, and sides. They whined when the arrows transformed back into birds and returned to the air.

Only a few hounds were left to continue after Blencan. They ducked their heads and looked for buildings to run away toward, away from the birds wheeling back around overhead.



Bloody-beard did not turn his head at the birds' approach—not even when they transformed into arrows and began to land against him. None could pierce his armor.

“So there’s the answer!” the giant laughed. “Instead of arrows against my coat of armor and fine cloak of scales, you come bearing birds! You are a poor sort of hero, aren’t you? No quiver, no arrows, and that ragged scrap for a cloak!”

“A banner,” Gibbet answered. “From my village. Catherine’s Crossing, if you remember it.”

“All your homes to me are but kindling.” Bloody-beard swung his flail, and destroyed another wall around them, as Gibbet ducked away.

The prisoners called out for mercy. “He means to burn down the square atop us all!”

“I mean to burn down your whole village,” Bloody-beard called back. “You’ve hidden your best plate, and no one’s said where. It would have saved me some small effort if you had, but now still I’ll simply sort it out from the ashes!”

Gibbet raised out his hand. The last of the sparrows landed and transformed into an arrow. He nocked and drew back, his bow firing the arrow with more force than the flying bird alone.

And still, it wasn’t enough to pierce the giant’s armor.

“A paltry try. With a few more pieces, I’ll have armor enough to survive even the forges at Gauntlgrym—and you think to pierce it with a bird?”

The giant swung, and another building fell.

“And when I free the primordial trapped there, Maegera will forge even greater armor for us all!”

When the giant swung again, the square had all but collapsed into flame.

“Tell me, what trifling piece did your village contribute that you’ve come all this way to reclaim?”

Gibbet rolled back to his feet. “The piece over your heart. My mother’s breastplate.”

“Then come pry it off!” With a roar, the giant smashed his flail down. Three dragon heads pounded into the ground.

Gibbet ran forward, leaping onto the weapon as the giant brought it up for another swing. He raised his hand out again, this time for the red-tipped hawk. The last of his birds. As an arrow with fletching likewise edged in red, its shaft had been carved with a runic line for *giant*. And a second, for *fire giant*. And a third, for *Bloody-beard*. An arrow of slaying, trained as much as crafted. Gibbet nocked the arrow and drew back.

The giant raised him into the air. “If it was your mother’s, how true was her armor? How true is your aim?”

“True enough,” Gibbet said, and fired. Not at his mother’s plate, for he had never wished to test it; her armor would deflect even this arrow, he knew. Instead, he shot straight into the giant’s eye.

Bloody-beard fell, his flail crashing to the ground.

Gibbet rose next to it, choking, coughing, holding his cloak over his mouth against the smoke. He made his way to the prisoners, taking out a key—the one from his own gibbet cage, since magicked to fit all prison locks. When he opened the cage door, a confusion of cooked and bloody hands reached out for him—the prisoners’ hands from Catherine’s Crossing, and Gibbet had to hold himself back from fighting against them, even when they grabbed at his cloak, trying to pull him towards them....

No, he realized. To turn him around. To warn him, as the giant staggered back to his feet. And still, they held onto his cloak in desperation, holding him there, begging him to set them free.

“I never gave permission to leave your cage,” Bloody-beard rumbled. He reached for the arrow, pulling it out along with his eyeball, throwing them both away into the flames. Gibbet imagined the hawk, its broken body so crudely discarded. “Not back in Catherine’s Crossing. And not here. You will join your fellows inside.”

The giant’s face had already begun to blacken from the arrow wound. He’d been killed by it already, just not yet fallen dead—and would not before he reached Gibbet.

“You’ll be cooked along with the rest—” The giant’s head rotted to an exposed skull even as he stormed over, set with a single living eye and his great, flowing beard. “—but first smashed to pudding as well!” He raised his foot, showing Gibbet that even the sole of his boots had been armored. And Gibbet, held by his cloak, had no room to push into the cage through the bodies to escape it.

By then Blencan made his way back to the square. From his panting tongue, the blink dog had been on quite a run—and none of the hell hounds had finished it with him.

The giant roared. Instead of crushing Gibbet, he only clutched his chest.

Gibbet hadn't seen the dog blink. He called out to Blencan as the giant stumbled away and pried at his armor. It wouldn't take twelve years to remove, but more time than the giant had; Bloody-beard dropped to one knee, clawing at the breastplate over his heart.

Gibbet called out again as the giant fell over, finally dead. And still no answer from Blencan. The dog had blinked fully away.

The prisoners could hardly talk when Gibbet helped them free. With frail voices, they thanked him for the water he was finally able to give.



As he left the village, his own face now dirty with soot, Gibbet held a bundle against his mother's old breastplate worn beneath his cloak. He passed reinforced militia making their way back to Beliard under the guide of the Emerald Enclave. Marros, now the Autumnreaver, led their patrol.

"No one left for us to fight?" they joked and asked him. "No one left for us to save? What happened to all your birds, Gibbet? What happened to your dog?"

Gibbet didn't answer. The birds had been arrows before they'd been transformed; he felt badly that they would never fly again. But Blencan had always been his dog, and he would do anything to save him. When he cut away his mother's armor, he'd heard a whimper from within the giant; cutting deeper, he found how Blencan had managed to blink inside the giant's chest. The dog had bitten into Bloody-beard's heart and refused to blink back out, if he even could, sacrificing himself. Smothered and burned by the giant's blood.

He would need healing. The boy with the stuffed owlbear, Gibbet thought, if he could find him along the road. The boy could help nurse Blencan—the way Gibbet once helped raise his family's dogs—at least while Gibbet went back on patrol. Catherine's Crossing may have been avenged, but more giants stood tall in the shadows behind Bloody-beard.

After all, a boy could use a dog in a realm where giants trod.
Especially a dog that took to blinking.



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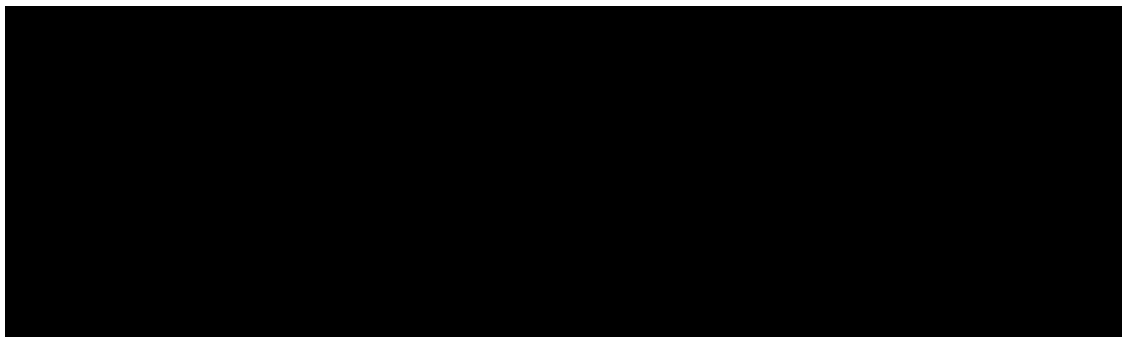
Streaming Highlights

From podcasts to videos, discover what we're into this issue.



Force Grey: Giant Hunters

Join Dungeon Master Matt Mercer and the mighty Force Grey as they come to the end of their journey in the concluding episode of the series which previews *Storm King's Thunder*. Utkarsh Ambudkar, Shelby Fero, Ashley Johnson, Brian Posehn, and Jonah Ray confront the power of a mighty golem and learn the meaning of betrayal in Force Grey's gripping climax.

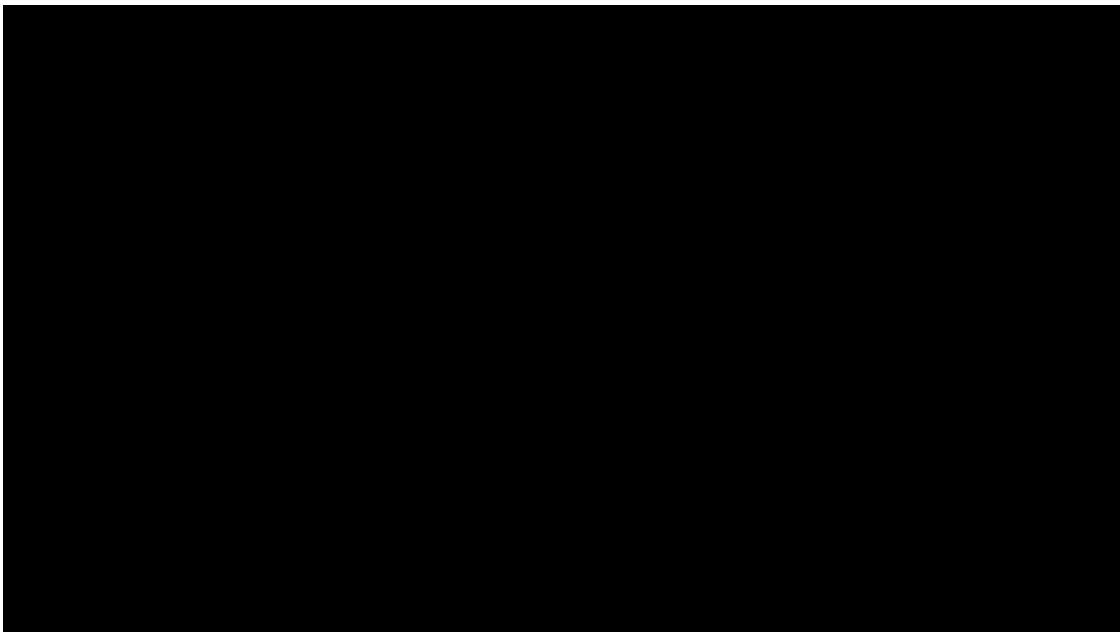




Twits and Crits, the new D&D show from Funhaus

A brand new adventure from the Funhaus crew, whose opening confession that they’ve “drawn a bunch of idiots together to play D&D” belies their hilarious live roleplaying sessions. DM Dan is in charge and there’s lots of laughter and some extremely dodgy voice acting, but as the players are keen to point out, they’re twits, not idiots.

Anyone who’s ever wanted an exclusive peek inside the D&D art department hit the jackpot in April, and what a day for the cameras to be rolling! This magical world faces some complex issues, and the veteran team grappled with a problem that might have overwhelmed other, *greener* staff members. Did we mention this was April 1, 2016?



Dragon Talk with Scott Kurtz

The D&D podcast is joined by Binwin Bronzebottom himself, the illustrious Scott Kurtz of PVP and Acquisitions Inc. who drops in to chat about what's happening at PAX West 2016. There's also full details on Acquisitions Inc.'s Fathom debut in theaters across the US, where you can earn a chance to brew beer with Binwin and become an Acquisitions Inc. intern.

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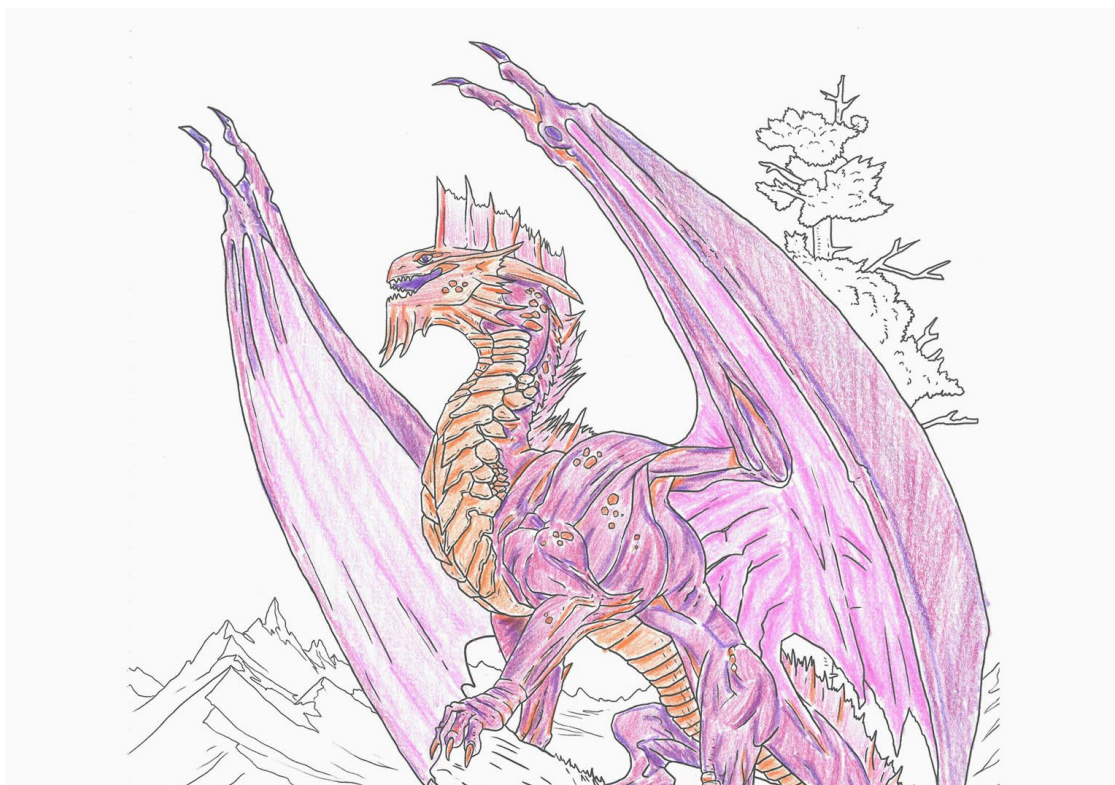


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The Pencil Is Mightier Than The Sword

Color in a gallery of heroes, villains, monsters and rogues

Coloring books are the new black, well, the new black and white at least. Players everywhere are rediscovering the therapeutic delights of a good coloring-in session and in the new *Monsters and Heroes of the Realms Coloring Book*, you'll be able to unleash your creative talents on pictures drawn from the official D&D manuals, featuring both previously unseen art and 16 full-color illustrations for inspiration. To give you a little taste of what's in store, *Dragon+* asked some of D&D's favorite authors and personalities to impress us with their skills. Here's a gallery of their finest work taking the blank pages and making them sing with color and character.

BEFORE AND AFTER COLORING





Monsters and Heroes of the Realms Coloring Book will be available on September 22, 2016. You can pre-order it on Amazon, or pick it up at your local bookstore.

PRE-ORDER NOW

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Unearthed Arcana: Arcane Casters

Mike Mearls explores the Faithful

This month, Unearthed Arcana presents new options that allow arcane casters to express their faith in the gods. The Pact of the Seeker was inspired by the Greyhawk deity Celestian, god of the stars, space, and wanderers. It provides a pact that ties a warlock to a mysterious, inscrutable deity dedicated to gathering knowledge and lore.

WARLOCK OTHERWORLDLY PATRON: THE SEEKER

Your patron is an inscrutable being who travels the Astral Plane in search of knowledge and secrets. In return for your patron's gifts, you wander the world seeking lore that you can share with the Seeker.

Your patron could be any deity or other powerful entity dedicated to knowledge or forgotten lore.

Celestian is an ideal patron for a Greyhawk campaign, and was the inspiration for this concept. In the Forgotten Realms, your patron might be Azuth or Oghma. Aureon makes an excellent patron in Eberron, while in Krynne and the Dragonlance campaign setting, Gilean is a good match for the Seeker's role.

Seeker Expanded Spells

Spell level: 1st

Spells: feather fall, jump

Spell level: 2nd

Spells: levitate, locate object

Spell level: 3rd

Spells: clairvoyance, sending

Spell level: 4th

arcane eye, locate creature

Spell level: 5th

legend lore, passwall

Unearthed Arcana: Pact of the Seeker

For more on the Pact of the Seeker including details on pact boons, plus the Arcane Tradition of Theurgy, download the full PDF here.

[DOWNLOAD THE PDF](#)

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Unearthed Arcana: The Faithful

This month, Unearthed Arcana presents two new options that allow arcane casters to express their faith in the gods.

The Pact of the Seeker was inspired by the Greyhawk deity Celestian, god of the stars, space, and wanderers. It provides a pact that ties a warlock to a mysterious, inscrutable deity dedicated to gathering knowledge and lore.

For wizards, the Theurgy arcane tradition allows you to create a magic-user whose arcane instruction is guided by the teachings of a deity. This design is a personal favorite of mine, as it's always been something of a pet peeve that a god of magic would primarily have clerics rather than wizards as followers. This tradition allows a wizard to gain the benefits of a divine domain.

Warlock Otherworldly Patron: The Seeker

Your patron is an inscrutable being who travels the Astral Plane in search of knowledge and secrets. In return for your patron's gifts, you wander the world seeking lore that you can share with the Seeker.

Your patron could be any deity or other powerful entity dedicated to knowledge or forgotten lore. Celestian is an ideal patron for a Greyhawk campaign, and was the inspiration for this concept. In the Forgotten Realms, your patron might be Azuth or Oghma. Aureon makes an excellent patron in Eberron, while in Krynn and the Dragonlance campaign setting, Gilean is a good match for the Seeker's role.

Expanded Spell List

The Seeker lets you choose from an expanded list of spells when you learn a warlock spell. The following spells are added to the warlock spell list for you.

Seeker Expanded Spells

Spell Level	Spells
1st	<i>feather fall, jump</i>
2nd	<i>levitate, locate object</i>
3rd	<i>clairvoyance, sending</i>
4th	<i>arcane eye, locate creature</i>
5th	<i>legend lore, passwall</i>

Shielding Aurora

Starting at 1st level, you can invoke the Seeker's power to protect you from harm. As a bonus action, you create a whirling aurora of brilliant energy that swirls around you. Until the end of your next turn, you gain resistance to all damage, and if a hostile creature ends its turn within 10 feet of you, it takes radiant damage equal to your warlock level + your Charisma modifier.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Pact Boon: Pact of the Star Chain

At 3rd level, a character dedicated to the Seeker can select this option instead of one of the warlock's existing Pact Boon options.

The Seeker grants you a chain forged from starlight, decorated with seven gleaming motes of brightness. While the chain is on your person, you know the *augury* spell and can cast it as a ritual. The spell doesn't count against your number of spells known.

Additionally, you can invoke the Seeker's power to gain advantage on an Intelligence check while you carry this item. Once you use this ability, you cannot use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

If you lose your Star Chain, you can perform a 1-hour ceremony to receive a replacement from the Seeker. The ceremony can be performed during a short or long rest, and it destroys the previous chain. The chain disappears in a flash of light when you die.

The exact form of this item might be different depending on your patron. The Star Chain is inspired by the Greyhawk deity Celestian.

Astral Refuge

At 6th level, you gain the ability to step into an astral refuge. As an action, you disappear from the world for a brief moment and enter the Astral Plane, taking advantage of its timeless nature. While in your astral refuge, you can take two actions to cast spells that target only you. After using those two actions, you return to the space you occupied and your turn ends.

Far Wanderer

At 10th level, you no longer need to breathe, and you gain resistance to fire damage and cold damage.

Astral Sequestration

Starting at 14th level, you gain the ability to sequester yourself and your allies on the Astral Plane.

By performing a special ritual over the course of 5 minutes, you shift yourself and up to ten willing creatures you can see to the Astral Plane. You and those creatures gain the benefits of a short rest while sequestered on the Astral Plane. You then return to the spaces you all occupied when you used this ability, with no time having passed in the world.

During this short rest, you and the creatures you sequester can make use of any options available during a rest that affect only you and the creatures you sequester.

Once you use this ability, you cannot use it again until you complete a long rest.

Arcane Tradition: Theurgy

A number of deities claim arcane magic as their domain. While the idea of a divine being embracing such power might seem contradictory, magic is as much a part of the fabric of the cosmos as wind, fire, lightning, and all other primal forces. Just as there are deities of the sea and gods of warfare, the arcane arts feature their own divine patrons.

Such deities often have clerics, but many gods of magic bid their followers to take up the study of wizardry. These religious magic-users follow the arcane tradition of Theurgy, and are commonly known as theurgists. Such spellcasters are as

dedicated and scholarly as any other wizard, but they blend their arcane study with religious teachings.

Divine Inspiration

When you select this tradition at 2nd level, pick a divine domain from your chosen deity's list of eligible domains. Alternatively, the following domains are thematically appropriate and easily compatible with the theurgist concept:

- Arcana*
- Knowledge
- Light

* From the *Sword Coast Adventurers' Guide*.

Arcane Initiate

Beginning when you select this tradition at 2nd level, whenever you gain a wizard level, you can choose to replace one of the wizard spells you add to your spellbook with a cleric domain spell for your chosen domain. The spell must be of a level for which you have spell slots.

If you add all of your domain spells to your spellbook, you can subsequently opt to add any spell from the cleric spell list instead. The spell must still be of a level for which you have spell slots.

Other wizards cannot copy cleric spells from your spellbook into their own spellbooks.

Channel Arcana

At 2nd level, you gain the ability to channel arcane energy directly from your deity, using that energy to fuel magical effects. You start with two such effects: Divine Arcana and the Channel Divinity option granted at 2nd level by your chosen domain. You employ that Channel Divinity option by using your Channel Arcana ability.

When you use your Channel Arcana, you choose which effect to create. You must then finish a short or long rest to use your Channel Arcana again.

Some Channel Arcana effects require saving throws. When you use such an effect, the save DC equals your wizard spell save DC.

Beginning at 6th level, you can use your Channel Arcana twice between rests, and beginning at 18th level, you can use it three times between rests. When you finish a short or long rest, you regain your expended uses.

When you gain further uses for Channel Divinity from your domain, you can employ them by using your Channel Arcana ability.

Channel Arcana: Divine Arcana

As a bonus action, you speak a prayer to control the flow of magic around you. The next spell you cast gains a +2 bonus to its attack roll or saving throw DC, as appropriate.

Arcane Acolyte

At 6th level, you gain your chosen domain's 1st-level benefits. However, you do not gain any weapon or armor proficiencies from your domain.

Arcane Priest

At 10th level, you gain your chosen domain's 6th-level benefits. Your faith and your understanding of magic allow you to delve into your god's secrets.

Arcane High Priest

At 14th level, you gain your chosen domain's 17th-level benefits. Your academic nature and understanding of magic and doctrine allow you to master this ability sooner than a cleric of your domain.



Sage Advice

Jeremy Crawford hosts the monthly column that gives official clarifications of D&D rules and provides reference documents to help your D&D game run more smoothly.

Class Features



(Select to view)

For the barbarian's Reckless Attack, do you grant advantage to all enemies, or only to the target of your attack?

If you use the barbarian's Reckless Attack, all attack rolls have advantage against you until the start of your next turn.

Can a fighter have two fighting styles active at once? Dueling and Defense, for example?

You can benefit from more than one Fighting Style option at a time, as long as they aren't mutually exclusive, as Dueling and Great Weapon Fighting are.

Can the monk's Open Hand Technique push a Large or larger creature or knock it prone?

The Open Hand Technique intentionally ignores creature size. A monk's ki fuels many extraordinary effects! If a feature is limited by creature size, the feature tells you so.

Would a Paladin's Divine Sense register a tiefling due to their infernal heritage?

A tiefling is a humanoid, not a fiend, and therefore escapes the notice of Divine Sense. The feature detects creatures that have the celestial, fiend, or undead creature type.

Multiclassing

Can a barbarian/cleric use spiritual weapon to attack while raging, if it is cast before entering Rage?

A barbarian's Rage makes concentration impossible but has no effect on spells, like spiritual weapon, that don't require concentration.

Can a barbarian/fighter (Battle Master) use maneuvers while raging?
Nothing in the barbarian's Rage feature precludes the use of maneuvers.

Feats



(Select to view)

Is Elemental Adept the only feat you can take more than once?

Elemental Adept is the only feat in the *Player's Handbook* that you can take more than once.

Class features and feats sometimes affect a shapechanged druid. Does the Tough feat have an effect while shifting?

The intent is no. The Tough feat affects a druid's hit points, which are replaced by the beast's hit points while using Wild Shape.

Combat



(Select to view)

Does a grapple or a shove trigger the Tempest cleric's Wrath of the Storm or a Battle Master's Riposte?

The answer to both questions is no. The grappling and shoving options (PH, 195) don't result in a hit or a miss.

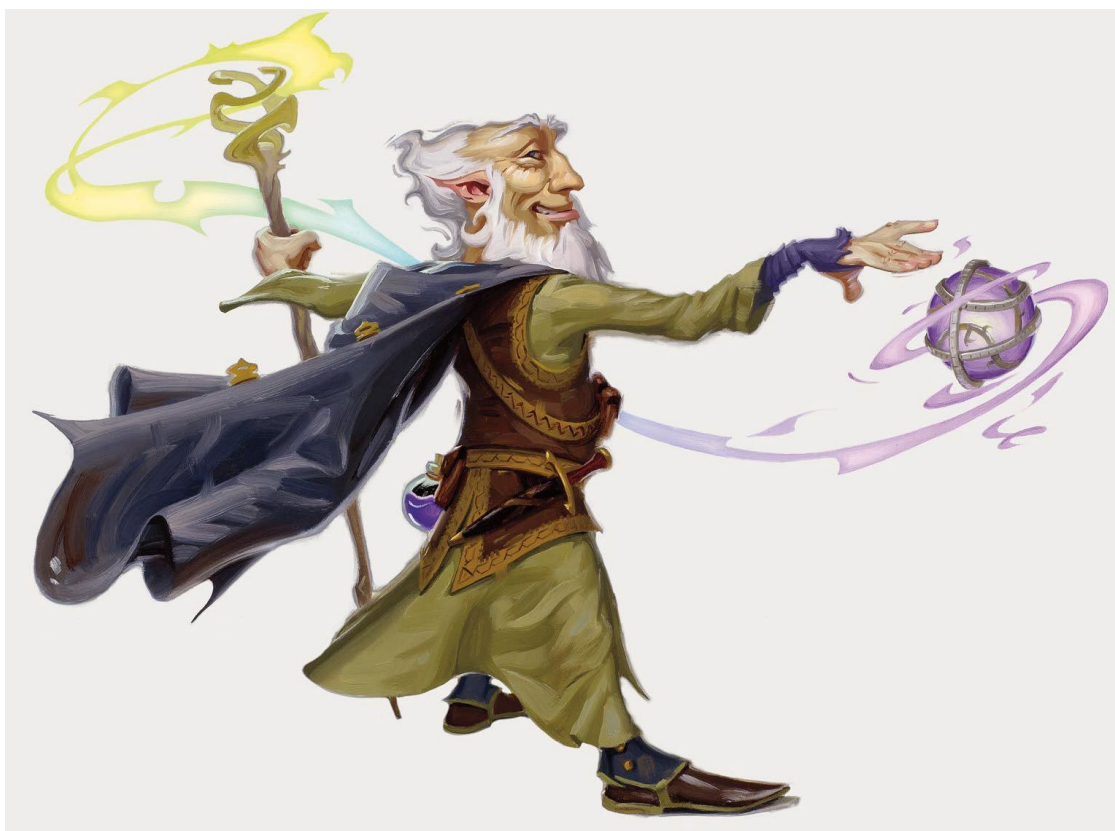
I have a readied action. Can I stop readying to take an opportunity attack? Or is ready a full turn commitment?

If you have an action readied, you can make an opportunity attack, which causes you to stop readying.

If a wizard casts a spell like fireball during a surprise round, do the enemies get disadvantage on their saving throw?

Being surprised has no effect on saves. If you're surprised, you can't move or take an action on your first turn of the combat and you can't take a reaction until that turn ends (PH, 189).

Specific Spells



(Select to view)

If the damage from disintegrate reduces a half-orc to 0 hit points, can Relentless Endurance prevent the orc from turning to ash?

If disintegrate reduces you to 0 hit points, you're killed outright, as you turn to dust. If you're a half-orc, Relentless Endurance can't save you.

What happens if a druid using Wild Shape is reduced to 0 hit points by disintegrate? Does the druid simply leave beast form?

The druid turns to dust, since the spell disintegrates you the instant

you drop to 0 hit points.

Does the heroes' feast spell grant immunity to poison damage or just the poison condition?

The heroes' feast spell grants immunity to poison in any form—damage and the condition.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jeremy Crawford is the co-lead designer of fifth edition *Dungeons & Dragons*. He was the lead designer of the fifth edition *Player's Handbook* and one of the leads on the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. He has worked on many other D&D books since coming to Wizards of the Coast in 2007. You can reach him on Twitter ([@JeremyECrawford](#)).

OTHER RESOURCES

Visit these D&D reference documents for more clarifications:

[Basic Rules for Dungeons & Dragons](#)

[D&D Spell List](#) (version 1.01)

[Monsters by Challenge Rating](#) (version 1.0)

[D&D Monsters by Type](#) (version 1.0)

[Magic Items by Rarity](#) (version 1.0)

[Conversions to 5th Edition D&D](#) (version 1.01)

[Character Sheets](#)

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Comic: Against the Giants

Enter The Hall of the Fire Giant King

Jason Thompson's hilarious re-imagining of the classic G series of adventures culminates in G3, the Hall of the Fire Giant King, as our dauntless though hapless adventurers enlist an army of men-at-arms and assorted orcs to take the fight to King Snurre.

Heaven and earth lie before us such a vast force of our peoples assembled together!

This dungeon is the result for any & all, hence so we must face it as a tactical *assault* battle!

Let those who would call us murder hawks know that we are the sympathetic ones at our assault, go forth and put every giant to the sword!

Before this can start, immediate of sacrifice, another being!

Dungeons & Dragons Module G3: climax of the "Against the Giants" epic!

HALLOF THE FIREGIANT KING

An adventure for insanely brave characters level 8-12

CONTENTS: 105 fire giants, 90 gnomes, 77 trolls, 52 drow, 22 hell hounds, 12 piercers, 12 fire beetles, 10 wererats, 6 frost giants, 5 hill giants, 4 stone giants, etc.

by Gary Gygax

START

FINISH
Tunnel entrance to Underdark (see module D3)

ENDINGS

DRAWN BY JASON THOMPSON (GAMOCOMAN)

(Select to view)

BACK TO TOP

Humans and orcs! Never before has such a vast force of our peoples assembled together! This dungeon is too much for any 6-8 heroes so we must face it as a tactical ~~assault~~ battle! Let those who would call us murder hoboes know that we are the sympathetic ones as we assault yon fortress and put every giant to the sword before they can eat, immolate or sacrifice another being!



Dungeons & Dragons Module G3: climax of the "Against the Giants" epic!

HALL OF THE FIRE GIANT KING

An adventure for insanely brave characters level 8-12

by Gary Gygax

CONTENTS: 105 fire giants, 90 gnolls, 77 trolls, 52 drow, 22 hell hounds, 12 piercers, 12 fire beetles, 10 wererats, 6 frost giants, 5 hill giants, 4 stone giants, etc.

1 Tired of stupidly fighting in tiny groups, heroes lead an army of 1000 men-at-arms & 1500 orcs through the flame barrens to the hall of the fire giant king. 150 men-at-arms and 100 orcs fall in lava pits, are burned in red dragon flybys, etc.

2 Thief climbs giant's fort looking for another way in but has his stubble burned off by flaming gases from vent hole.

3 The leaders plan the assault. Dwarf and half-orc argue over mine vs. token. Magic-user uses "Major Image" to create virtual tabletop display.

4 Meanwhile, the mood in the camp turns sour. Soldiers grumble over how thief's pet pig enjoys jewelry budget and unlimited ice access. 100 men-at-arms and 200 orcs die in a fight over cooler of lemonade.

5 Realizing they must strike now, half-orc and cleric of Pholtus lead the charge! Elven magic-user casts "Knock" and opens the 3' thick gate. King Snurre's harem greets the guests with the usual giant gift of thrown boulders.

6 5 giants, 50 orcs and 25 men-at-arms die in the first round (5M seconds or one minute depending on who you ask). Magic-user casts "Invisibility", opening a second front through queen Frumpy's linen closet.

7 Giants and their problematic allies flood the hall to join the battle. Tragically, the kitchen giants put dinner on the grill first.

12 Heroes run into fire giant holdouts. Suddenly, one of the giants throws off his cloak to reveal he's actually elven thief standing on ranger's shoulders! After giant-slaying and joyful reunion, thief and ranger explain how they were teleported to the fire barrens and had to disguise as giants to survive (see module G2).

14 Party spares stone giants on the promise they leave immediately and return to the habitation of the stone giant chief.

15 Evil temple fills everyone with lineage. At cleric's command, soldiers attack musical instruments and deface altar, accidentally summoning the avatar of the elder elemental eye. Seeing the eye, 50% of the soldiers are afflicted with death, madness, fright, rapid aging and/or homicidal insanity. 200 men-at-arms and 300 orcs die in the chaos.

16 The survivors leave the temple and

8 The tide of battle turns against the giants. 50 giants, another 100 orcs and 75 men-at-arms die. The giants call in 70 gnolls and 18 trolls from their temp agency in the basement.

9 The air in the great hall becomes pink due to aerosolized blood particles. Hell hounds' fire breath bakes the 1' thick pool of blood on the floor firm enough for the party to stand. 500 orcs, 350 men-at-arms and another 25 fire giants die. Finally, dwarf fighter kills king Snurre, ending the battle!

10 Druid finds cool cloak of "Polymorph into Hellhound."

11 Looking over the carnage, elven magic-user gives a speech about elves' moral superiority. Searching the fire giant's accounts, thief finds money trail leading to shadowy angel investors named "Drow."

12 Cleric of Kord chokes on spit in shiny cheese and dies. Cleric of Pholtus raises him.

17 Wall of tentacles eats 25 orcs, 10 men-at-arms and cleric of Kord. Cleric of Pholtus raises him.

18 Ranger, who fortunately had favored enemy: architecture, kills wall. Party enters creepy room full of lewd tapestries and "sweet, cloying, decayed-smelling, disgusting and euphoric" incense. Eclavura, leader of the drow and mastermind of the giant wars, greets the heroes with 8 tentacles to the face from her tentacle rod.

19 Elven thief backstabs Eclavura. Orcs happily fall back into their pattern of killing elves and finish off remaining drow.

20 Headman and torturer stop testing their dice in a glass of salt water and attack the intruders. Torturer flings men-at-arms into iron maiden. Executioner lops off half-orc's arm, cuts off cleric of Pholtus' head and throws the head down a well where party is unable to find it.



Next Issue: Dragon 10



Join us for thrills, spills and no doubt a few chills too, in issue 10 of *Dragon+* as we launch a spooky Halloween special.



We'll be talking to Lone Shark Games about the release of the brand new *Betrayal at House on the Hill* board game, and how it can be used to inspire your D&D adventures. We also delve into the new *Dungeonology* book with authors Matt Forbek and Adam Lee, in what promises to be an unforgettable journey through the Forgotten Realms.

On the literary score, there's an in-depth chat with R.A. Salvatore on the making of an unlikely drow hero and the fiery conclusion to the Legend of Drizzt novels, plus we'll be examining some of *Neverwinter*'s top ten story quests and getting in touch with our larcenous side, with a look at Gale Force Nine's new *Tyrants of the*

Underdark expansion decks.

Dragon+ will go out into the field for some monster spotting with a new entry from *Volo's Guide to Monsters* featuring the terrifying gnolls and finally, there'll be a brand new entry from the Best of the DMs Guild with another free adventure for you to download.

Find all this and much more in Issue 10 of *Dragon+*.

(Contents subject to change)



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A big thank you to the extended D&D family for
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